Rural Life in Litchfield County

CHARLES SHEPHERD PHELPS

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RURAL LIFE IN LITCHFIELD COUNTY

BY
CHARLES SHEPHERD PHELPS

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HOWARD WILLISTON CARTER,
Secretary.

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TO
THE FARM HOMES NESTLED AMONG THE
HILLS OF OLD LITCHFIELD, THIS
BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

CHAPTER I

TOPOGRAPHY AND SOIL

IN the northwest corner of the State of Connecticut are twenty-six towns, one for each letter in the alphabet, and taken together they constitute Litchfield County. It is the largest county in the State, the area being about 885 square miles. It was organized in 1751 as the fifth county in the State, although it had been settled many years before. Within the bounds of the county are found the highest land, the greatest lake area, the most rugged scenery, and some of the richest agricultural lands of the State. The highest point of land was for a long time a matter of dispute, but that designation is now given to Bear Mountain, in the town of Salisbury. This mountain reaches an elevation of 2355 feet above sea level, and there are a number of

other near-by points which come close to the two-thousand mark. While it was at first supposed that Norfolk contained the highest point of land in the county, the topographical surveys made at the instigation of Robbins Battell gave the palm to Bear Mountain. Later Mr. Battell caused to be erected a monument to mark the spot, thus permanently designating the highest point of land in the State.

Some of the cultivated lands of the county lie at an elevation of 1200 to 1500 feet, while much of the best agricultural lands are at a considerable elevation, notably in the towns of Goshen, Litchfield, Morris, Bridgewater and Washington. The fact that a settlement was begun on a hilltop made very little difference to the settlers, for they could produce only about enough to supply the home demands and there was little travel from town to town But now the question of marketing crops has become a more serious one to many of the hilltop farmers, for they are sometimes at loss to know what can be grown that will market to the best advantage. Improved highways, however, are slowly solving this problem, and this, together with the automobile, will soon make a distance of five to eight miles, for the hauling of crops to market, seem but a slight drawback.

The mountains on the western border of the county are often spoken of as the foothills of the Berkshires and are of the same general type, being thickly wooded

with fine forests on the lower slopes and rocky and covered with scrub oak and yellow pine towards the summits. Many elevated areas probably never will be of much agricultural value except for forestry, because of their inaccessibility and the shallowness of the soil. On the mountains that are frequently burned over there are often tracts of the native low blueberry and the huckleberry, not perhaps regarded as a strictly agricultural product, but one that certainly adds to the income of the hill towns.

The soil in general is what is known as glacial drift or till. There is ample evidence of glacial action throughout the county, in the polished ledges cut with furrows, in the smooth boulders scattered everywhere, in the steep-sided kettle holes, and especially in the universal mix-up of the soils. But no outcome of the glacial forces adds more to the beauty of the country than the numerous lakes. There are over a thousand lakes in Connecticut, and of these Litchfield County has the greatest surface, Bantam Lake, lying in the towns of Litchfield and Morris, being the largest. In the town of Salisbury lie the Twin Lakes, which, if they had not built a barrier and divided themselves into two lakes, would be almost as large as Bantam. In the town of Warren is Lake Waramaug, in Kent are the Spectacle Ponds, in Canaan and Norfolk is Lake Wangum, and in Winchester is Highland Lake. The lakes

of the single town of Salisbury cover nearly 1700 acres and afford natural beauty spots as well as popular summer resorts.

In many places in the county will be found extensive, low, peaty tracts of land, that once represented lake areas, but which have been filling in for thousands of years by the slow growth and decay of vegetation. In some instances such areas still have a small lake or pond near the center, as in the case of Beeslick Pond in Salisbury. During the slow processes of time, water-weeds crept into these old lakes, peat moss and bushes reached out from the shallow water at the edge, and in the course of many years the lake was transformed into a mere bog, rich in all kinds of botanical treasures. After many more years, as the outcome of changes due to tillage and drainage, it may have become a good piece of mowing land.

In mountainous regions there are sure to be brooks, and wherever there are mountain brooks there ravines will be found. In the hills of Litchfield County are found some of the wildest, most picturesque ravines in New England. Kent Falls ravine is of peculiar beauty, carved as it is partly out of white limestone. On the banks and limestone ledges grow the most graceful of ferns—the *Cystopteris bulbifera,* or bladder fern; while the abundance of the *Camptosorus rhizophyllus,* or walking fern, is a delight to the botanist.

Of Sage's Ravine I will give two comments made by Henry Ward Beecher. "If this were in Colorado a safe path would be cut along the bank and it would be the show place of the region." "Never have I climbed a more wild or beautiful ravine. It is dangerous, too." Those who have followed it to its head, clinging to the roots of trees, along the wall at the foot of the falls, to cross the little side ravine, will appreciate the danger of the climb, but lovers of the beautifully wild will find above the falls even more beauty than below.

The principal rivers of the county are the Housatonic, the Naugatuck, the Shepaug and their tributaries, which drain the county from north to south, and the Farmington and its tributaries on the east. The larger rivers offer many advantages to the manufacturers and have afforded the natural resources for building up prosperous towns and boroughs that have developed a variety of industries. This diversity of industries has had an important bearing on the agricultural development of the county, for the most prosperous agriculture is always found near good markets. In the past many of the smaller streams afforded power for operating numerous small industries that were closely linked with the agriculture of the county, such as tanneries, woolen mills, wagon shops, cheese-box factories, nail and scythe works and so forth. The concentration of these various industries into big central plants has changed

the entire life of many rural towns. The time will again come when these numerous small waterfalls will be harnessed to provide electric power and light for many farm homes, and thus they will again be of value.

Of the forests that clothed this region when it was first settled scarcely a vestige remains. Until recently there was a bit of what might be called primeval forest in Colebrook, but even this has not been spared the woodman's axe. On the mountains there are a few spots too steep and inaccessible to be lumbered, and here we still find a few forest giants. But the hills are covered with pine, chestnut and birch, in spite of frequent cuttings and forest fires. Wherever we go up and down throughout the county, there is forest beauty everywhere. Perhaps the most notable example of the preservation of the stately monarchs of the forest is to be found on the Calhoun estate in Cornwall. Here may be seen a beautiful grove of pines, many trees of which tower majestically a hundred feet or more in height and have trunks three to four feet in diameter. A botanist, rushing through the county on the train, noted the abundance of paper birches. "It is a good country," he commented, "for paper birches do not thrive on poor soil." This is true, and though the soils of the county are extremely varied, yet the strictly agricultural lands are second to none.

The soils of the hill country, and in general those

outside the river valleys, are composed of glacial drift varying in fineness from coarse boulders and small pebbles down to fine sand and silty clays, these materials being mixed in widely varying proportions. These soils were, without doubt, formed by the slow grinding, scraping and pushing action of powerful glaciers, which in prehistoric times moved slowly over the whole region in a southwesterly direction. In many instances the powerful movement of the glaciers broke off and carried along massive boulders which lodged on the higher hills, and many fields were left so densely studded with small boulders as to make plowing almost impossible. In general, there is one type of soil on most of the higher lands of the county. This soil has been formed by the breaking down of rocks of granitic type. For many miles to the north the rocks are of the same general class as those on the higher lands of this county, and the bulk of the glaciated material is supposed to have been transported not more than ten to fifteen miles. When the granitic type of rock becomes weathered it makes a close-textured, clayey soil, which is usually more or less studded with boulders. These soils are typical hay and pasture soils, and Litchfield County has always been noted as a good hay and grazing country. Soils of this type are retentive of moisture and manure, and furnish liberal amounts of the elements needed in the growth of grasses, clover and most

cereals. In the earlier days the county was noted for its fine quality of cheese and butter, as it is now for its milk, and much of these higher lands are dotted over with rich dairy farms.

Another class of soils is that found in the river valleys, known as the alluvial soils and the terrace gravel. In general these soil areas are limited in extent owing to the narrowness of the valleys. The lower portion of the valleys represents soils of a sandy loam type, generally free from boulders. These are known as alluvial soils and are composed of gritty particles of rock which settled out of comparatively still water, while the finer, silty material was carried to the seas. Along the borders of the valleys are found terraces of gravel and coarse sand which were formed by the rapidly moving waters.

Following the great glacial epoch, our rivers were many times their present size, probably filling what now represents the river valleys. In some cases these river valleys were dammed by rock barriers, causing great lakes which later were drained out by the wearing away of the barriers. One of these ancient lakes seems to have covered the upper Housatonic valley, extending from a natural barrier at Falls Village to the northern part of Sheffield, Massachusetts, with a great arm extending up the Blackberry River valley nearly to West Norfolk. Another, with little doubt, covered the

fertile Pomperaug valley at the south side of the county. Into these vast deep-water areas were washed fine particles of rock materials from many sources, thus making soils with a great variety of mineral compounds and of a fine sandy texture. These soils now constitute some of the richest farm lands of the county. Near what must have been the shores of these old lake areas will be found deltas and beaches that constitute plateaus of coarser sandy or gravelly material. Such areas must have been formed by the swift inflowing rivers or the lashing waves. These soils are more sandy and less fertile than those that were formed beneath the deeper waters of the lake.

In the larger river valleys, such as the Housatonic, the Farmington, the Naugatuck and the Shepaug, will also be found soil areas formed similarly to those just mentioned. The extent of these areas depends on the width of the valleys and the volume and the velocity of the water of those early times. For example, the Naugatuck River on the east, while it was probably many times as large as now, apparently always had a rapid movement, and flowed over very hard rocks, and these two factors tended to prevent the formation of a wide and fertile valley. On the other hand, the waters of the Housatonic represented a larger volume and passed over rock formations which were not especially hard, and so the conditions were more favorable for

carving out a wide river valley. These valley soils, although fine in texture, are rarely clayey, as the fine rock particles were carried to the sea. They are usually composed of a great variety of minerals, depending of course on the variety of rock materials in their make-up. The absence of the finer clay silt, however, makes them more or less deficient in potassium compounds and often in calcium or lime compounds. Both of these elements, being somewhat soluble, were dissolved out and washed along to the sea. The porous texture of such soils causes them to leach manure and soluble plant food more readily than the heavier, finer textured, clayey soils of the hills. The warmth and natural dryness of the sandy soils cause the vegetable matter in them to decay and waste more rapidly than in the heavier soils of the uplands. If rightly managed, however, and especially if kept well stored with decaying vegetable matter, they are the very best soils for many cultivated crops, such as corn, potatoes, root crop, tobacco, and many kinds of garden vegetables.

A third type of soil, but smaller in area, is the limestone formation of the northwest section of the county. Much of the land in the towns of Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon is underlaid with the dolomitic form of limestone, and such soils are generally well supplied with lime and magnesia, and with this seems to be associated considerable fine material from the potash

and the phosphate bearing rocks. The soils of these towns, especially of Salisbury and Sharon, once produced fine crops of wheat and are still noted for producing luxuriant fields of oats and corn and hay. Clover thrives better in these soils than in the clay soils of the hills or the sandy soils of the valleys, and alfalfa has also been grown with considerable success in these limestone sections.

CHAPTER II

FIRST SETTLERS AND EARLY HOME LIFE

WHEN we write about the first settlers we naturally think of those brave white men and women who sought homes in "The Wilderness," as Litchfield County was designated in those early days. But before we attempt to trace the gradual settlement and subduing of the wilderness it may be well to give a little time and thought to those who possessed the land even earlier. While the Indians of the East were, of necessity, of roving habits—the various bands moving from place to place as game became scarce—yet, according to the old records, they did have semi-permanent homes. Along the fertile river valleys their wigwams were clustered in the summer-time, and here the friable soil was doubtless "tickled" by the rude implements of

the industrious squaws and made to yield the meager harvests of corn, beans, or squash, to eke out, during the long, tedious winters, the uncertain supply of game. For many years after the coming of the white man, the Indian lived on the river bank and forest edge, every now and then satisfying his desire for hunting by descending on some unsuspecting settler, as he wrought in his fields, and carrying him away captive, or killing him on the spot, if he attempted to escape. Some of those taken captive were fortunate enough to escape, but oftener they never came back.

At Kent and at New Milford, there were quite large Indian settlements. In fact, the center of the so-called Indian kingdom was in this vicinity. The history of the Indians of Kent, and of the Moravian mission among the Indians of Sharon, is too well known to need repeating here. According to Barbour's history, there were about two hundred warriors in the town of New Milford at the time of its settlement in 1707. Here dwelt a powerful sachem whose palace was standing when the white man came. "On the inner walls of this palace [which were of bark with the smooth side inwards] were pictured every known species of beast, bird, fish and insect, from the largest down to the smallest." At the falls below New Milford was a favorite fishing place of the Indians, great numbers of lampreys being taken there. As late as 1830, a few remnants of

the tribe annually claimed their fishing rights, which they never could be persuaded to sell.

Now, though there are doubtless a few descendants from this ancient people, our thoughts are oftenest turned to them when, by chance, we are lucky enough to turn up an arrow point or find a rude flint chip. Some very fortunate persons have found banner stones, pieces of crude pottery or spear points of fine workmanship. One legacy they have left which should be preserved with the greatest care—the legacy of names. There is not a town where we do not find hill, lake or stream bearing an Indian name. Unfortunately there is a tendency to rechristen natural objects and too often to give them merely sentimental names, or names of temporary owners. As a nation we lack originality and imagination in our names. We have found it easier to say North Pond than Keheketookosook, to say Lakeville Lake than Wononscopomoc, and yet how much more individualistic are the Indian names than those given by the white men! And if the Indian name be retained, it has the advantage claimed by the students of Greek and Latin—it belongs to a dead language and will not change; whereas Dow Hill is Dow Hill only as long as Dows live there—then it becomes in turn Huntington Hill, Parker Hill, Hale Hill, and Russell Hill, all within the memory of man. So let us forswear the questionable glory of giving our name to our village or

hill or stream and keep the name given it by the Indians, even if it has seventeen syllables.

It would be interesting to know how the first white man came, whether afoot on a hunting excursion, or on horseback, or by canoe. When history was beginning, the makers were so occupied with the problems of just living that it probably never occurred to them that in the after years people would be glad to know the smallest details of their daily life. As soon as they had gotten a foothold and built up a few rough houses, they called a minister and voted a church. This, as being of the utmost importance, they carefully recorded. Little side lights on the life of those early times often shine from these records, as, for instance, a minister was called and settled and given as pay "twenty pounds lawful money, forty cords of wood and the privilege of running the town cider mill"; or from the account of the settlement of another whose salary was to be paid in pork, corn, rye, peas, and other farm products. So strong was the power of the church and so important the minister in the town or State that nearly every town, in making allotments, set aside one or two or three for the use of the minister forever. In some towns one plot was given to "the first minister, his heirs and assigns forever," and another "for the use of his successors."

As has ever been true, the march of civilization was

continually westward. When the western part of the State was settled much of the best land in the central valleys and the coast country was already fully occupied and a new field must be sought. That the land to which they were going was known as the almost impenetrable "Green Woods" country, that it comprised rockbound hills, and that its dense forests were alive with wild beasts and untamed savages, were but trifling obstacles to their progress. The original settlers of the county were several generations removed from the first emigrants from England. Their fathers had known the hardships of wresting a livelihood from the unbroken forests, ever harassed by the cruel and treacherous savages; and though the sons retained the sturdy qualities which go to the making of a real pioneer, yet some of the sterner and harsher peculiarities of the race had become softened or modified by the influence of time. A more tolerant and liberal spirit was manifested in religion, and later in politics, by the people of this county than in some other settlements in the State.

The usual method of organizing a town was the selling of a parcel of land at auction to a number of men, called patentees, who might take up the land themselves or sell it to others. Cornwall was sold by the colony at Fairfield in 1738. It was laid out in "fifty three allotments and sold for fifty pounds per right." Canaan was sold at auction in New London. Goshen

was sold in New Haven, Norfolk at Middletown, Salisbury at Hartford, Kent at Windham. There seem to be various conjectures as to the reason for these different places of sale. It is probable that the government allotted portions of the unsettled territory to the towns already established, that the people might have opportunity to seek new homes, if they so desired, without the trouble and expense of a trip to the seat of the government.

The earliest settlement in Litchfield County was doubtless in the town of Woodbury. There is a tradition of the coming of these pioneers, that they were ordered by Governor Winthrop to follow the Pomperaug River up eight miles from its junction with the Housatonic. But the Pomperaug looked so small that they thought they must be mistaken and kept on until they came to the Shepaug. This they followed up eight miles to what is now known as Roxbury Valley. As this did not quite agree with the description of the land they were seeking, they crossed over the wilderness and discovered from Good Hill the rich valley which was the object of their search. On this hill they kindled the first recorded home camp-fire, and then in the name of God set up their altars. As an expression of gratitude for their safe arrival on the borders of such a rich valley—their "promised land"—a devout deacon of the party "fell on his knees, leading to prayer the little band

of hardy adventurers, invoking the blessing of Heaven upon their enterprise, and praying that their posterity might be an upright and godly people to the land."

A very different view of what constituted blessing and honor is said to have been voiced by another member of the party when he put up a petition praying "that *his* posterity might always be blessed with plenty of rum and military glory."

On further investigation of the region the following day, they found much of the valley land free from underbrush as a result of the Indian custom of annual burning. A suitable location for the "home lots" being agreed upon, this tract was divided into parcels, the outlying areas being held for later division. "No one could have more than twenty-five acres for his home lot, and the poorest among them was entitled to ten; so that a few rich could not control the township." This was the usual plan for these earlier settlements, and a very wise one it was. It provided for compact villages where defense against the Indians was effective. It laid the foundations for developing a sturdy race of yeomen, who, being land owners, would each feel an interest in the welfare of the new country, and it almost unwittingly provided the villages with the little open parks which are now so attractive in many of the country towns. The houses of the home lots were usually built around a hollow square enclosing the common. When

this was first set aside it was the common home pasture, so to speak, and upon it ranged all the livestock of the community. At evening the stock was driven into this common and tethered or fenced there for safety from Indians or wild beasts. This custom of letting the livestock run at common gave rise to frequent disputes concerning the ownership of such ordinary stock as sheep, pigs and cattle, until the town fathers decreed that each owner should have a registered ear mark. These were duly recorded, and in many a quaint volume of town records bound in pigskin may one read as follows:

"John Bird's ear mark for his creatures is a cross on the off ear taken out."

"Hezikier Culver's ear mark for his creatures is a half penny in the underside of the near ear."

"Saml Smedley's ear mark for his creatures is a hole in each ear."

"Samual Root, his ear mark for his creatures is a cross in the off ear and a half penny in the underside of the same."

As the marks on record increased the style of the marking became more complicated, as indicated by the following:

"Nathan Mitchel, his ear mark for his creatures is a cross cut on the off ear and a slit in the cross of the near ear and a slit in the underside of the near ear."

The taking of stray animals, and their impounding and sale when not claimed by the owner, was also common, as shown by the following, copied from the Litchfield town records:

"Two red yearlen heffers marked with a cross in the off ear and one black yearlen heffer with some white upon the rump, white under bolly and sum white upon the inside of the hind leggs—also marked with a cross in the off ear—which heffers are in the custody of Thomas Lee and have been prized by his desire on the 27th day of November last by us, by the sum of three pounds and fifteen shillings, by us John Boldwin, Joseph Bixy. The above named heffers are put upon record this fifth day of December anno domini 1723."

Also the following, which is a record of sale:

"Taken damage feasant, and impounded by Samuel Plum in Litchfield and sold as the law demits by Ozias Lewis, the following sheep, marks as follows: sold for 1£ 11s; sold for 1£ 13s."

Although King Philip's war, two years later, wrought havoc to the little band of a dozen or more families that had ventured to settle in new homes in the wilderness, and drove them back to the parent town, yet the records show that within a few years a road was laid out along the old Indian trail from what is now Southbury to the present site of Woodbury, and new settlements were rapidly made along this highway.

FIRST SETTLERS AND EARLY HOME LIFE

New Milford, in the rich valley of the Pootatuch (later known as the Housatonic), was the second settlement, being occupied first in 1707. The fact that the settlers came mostly from Milford gave to the settlement the name New Milford.

As Litchfield County is only about sixty miles from the Hudson, it is not surprising that settlers of Dutch descent early came to its western border, purchasing lands from the Indians and making settlements. In fact, the western border of the county was long in dispute between the Dutch and the English. Tradition has it that the redoubtable Ethan Allen settled it forever—in his mind, anyway—by planting a cannon on Town Hill in Salisbury and declaring that it should be Connecticut territory as far as this cannon should carry a ball. These Dutch settlers took up holdings at Weatogue in Salisbury as early as 1720, although the sale of the town did not take place till 1737. The presence of prominent families of both Dutch and English extraction, in the early history of the town, is shown on the land records by such names as Dutcher, Knickerbacher and Van Duzen on the one hand, and Russell, Lamb, Porter and Church on the other. The influence of the early Dutch settlers is still seen in the Dutch style of architecture. There are several quaint, low houses which are in decided contrast to the more dignified square-built houses of colonial architecture. The

houses of the Dutch type are built usually under the lee of a protecting hill which afforded opportunity for the basement rooms much affected by the Dutch.

The close of the first century in the history of the county was celebrated in 1851 by a centennial at the county seat. Among the many notable addresses was the classic discourse, "The Age of Homespun," by the great divine Horace Bushnell, who, although his fame had taken him to other realms, was himself a son of the county. So clearly does this discourse set forth the spirit of the age, as represented in the first century of our history, that I venture to quote briefly: "Given the fact that a people spin their own dress, and you have in that fact a whole volume of characteristics. The distinction will show them to be a people not in trade, whose life centers in the family, home bred in their manners, primitive and simple in their character, inflexible in their piety. If the clothing is to be manufactured in the house, then flax will be grown in the plowed land, sheep will be raised in the pasture, and the measure of the flax ground and the number of the flock will correspond with the measure of the home market, the number of sons and daughters to be clothed, so that the agriculture out of doors will map the family indoors."

In other words, this was an age when agriculture was a self-supporting industry. The wants of the family

were fully supplied from the fields, the flocks, the herds and the forest. The house was a factory on the farm, and the farmer the producer of the raw materials used in the factory. The conditions, throughout the entire county, were much the same during the earlier part of the first century of our history, and were marked by an almost entire absence of trade. True, the farmers in the southern edge of the county could reach the coast and found a limited market with the West Indies, and the extreme western towns found a small outlet for farm products by way of the Hudson River, but the almost entire absence of roads and the scarcity of vehicles for transportation made travel almost impossible, except on horseback. In the earlier days this mode of travel was practised alike by the women and the men.

The first dwellings were doubtless made from hewn timbers taken directly from the forests, but as power saw-mills were early constructed along the many streams, rough boards were soon sawed for the outside covering, flooring and interior finish, and the original log houses were soon replaced by more pretentious dwellings. All of the finish had to be done by hand-working, and so skilled were many of the workmen that the interior arrangements are without parallel to-day for utility, combined with good taste. The heavy hewn timbers, often showing in the corners and ceilings of the

rooms, were features of beauty as well as strength. The mellowed color of the wood gave a tone to the whole room, and when the beams were ornamented with a simple carved design, as was sometimes done in the "best room," the effect was, as an old, old lady once said, "right neat and tasty." Very often the walls of the rooms in these old houses are covered with wooden panels, especially about the chimney, where the panels concealed the various handy cupboards and snug recesses.

The long lean-to roof, sometimes sloping nearly to the ground, was a shrewd attempt of the early settlers to avoid the tax laid by Queen Anne on all two-story houses. These salt-box houses, as they are called, are quite characteristic of rural New England. They allow for great surface area on the first floor and provide full height chambers on one side of the upper story. The low roof with its gentle rise had its possible disadvantages, as voiced in the old couplet,

"O for a thousand bricks
To build my chimney higher;
To keep the pesky neighbors' gals
From putting out my fire."

One of the earliest and most important improvements bearing on building construction is credited to

the astuteness of a Litchfield County man during Revolutionary days. Up to this time nails were all hammered out of bar iron, a slow and expensive process. There was a slitting mill in New Jersey in which nail rods were made, but the process was kept secret. Samuel Forbes of Canaan wished to obtain a knowledge of it, and so employed an ingenious mechanic and millwright, who, under disguise, obtained admission to the mill and critically and without suspicion marked the machinery and its operations so as to be able to make a model of the machine and construct a mill for Forbes.

The shingles used in the early days were all riven by hand. "A block was sawn from whatever wood was handy, ash or chestnut or pine, but a good straight grain. Then the piece was set on end and it was carefully split into thin pieces by frow and wooden mallet. These were then shaved to the proper thinness and would last, even the pine shingle, for fifty years. And that was because they didn't lay 'em so tight. What was a frow? Oh, it was like a broad, thin-bladed axe, and was always struck by a mallet to drive it in."

But it was the great stone chimney with its flanking fireplaces that was the heart of the home. Built of rough field stone, rudely cut into blocks, the chimney often took up as much space on the first floor as a modern city room. This great size was necessary to provide flues for the many fireplaces which were built in it,

up and down on all sides; often there were six, sometimes twenty. In some of these old chimneys, too, there was built a little room where, on projecting pegs, could be hung and smoked the yearly supply of hams and bacon. Often a rude ladder was constructed of projecting stones on the outside of the chimney, by means of which one could climb from cellar to roof. Around the hearth, in the great living room, the family gathered in the long winter evenings, each one busy with some task. The smoke from the great logs of beech, birch, oak and hickory, against the evening sky, bespoke a condition of interior comfort and signaled a welcome to many a stranger. To give a little idea of the size of those great fireplaces, a lady told me not long ago that she well remembered standing in the corner of the fireplace with a good fire blazing on the hearth and looking up with awe and wonder at the stars twinkling above the chimney top.

In these days of ready-made goods one can scarcely imagine the variety of occupations pursued in these old living rooms. Here the wool was carded and spun, here stockings were knit and the flax was spun, and possibly the earlier preparation was given it here. By the light of the blazing fire the thrifty farmer carved out the simple tools used in his primitive agriculture. Here he fashioned flails, hand cards, wooden rakes or harrow teeth, made spiles for tapping the maple trees, or fash-

ioned snow-shoes to be used in crossing the drifted snows they had in those good old-fashioned winters.

During the Revolution much of the cherished pewter was melted for bullets. The story goes that in the town of Sharon there was a bullet "bee" and several bushels of bullets were moulded in an evening. Then, the household supply of pewter dishes being seriously depleted, there was another "bee" at which the young men carved wooden plates and trenchers to take the place of those patriotically sacrificed to the cause of freedom.

Aside from the fashioning of the lighter implements by the fireplace and the cutting and hauling of the great piles of wood needed for the year's supply, the farmer and his sons often worked during the winter at some minor trades in small shops built for the purpose. There they broke and hetcheled the flax, made barrels, butter firkins, wash tubs, and buckets for water, for milk or for sap. They put flag or rush bottoms in chairs and the more skilful fashioned some of the plain, strong pieces of furniture out of the great black cherry trees that had been felled and seasoned for the purpose.

In the towns where there were limestone outcroppings, the farmers used to make a rough kiln, piling it full of the pieces of limestone and then burning it. After burning it would be left in a heap until a convenient time, when it would be hauled by ox teams to

Hartford or Albany, to be exchanged for household necessities. It took three days to make the trip from Canaan to Hartford and return—two trips a week.

On some of the farms slaves were kept to do the heavier work for the house and farm. One man brought with him from his former home in the South over a hundred slaves, but soon sold most of them for lack of slave quarters.

The days of the house-mother in those early times were filled with duties, many and various. She had to look well to the ways of her household, else it suffered from lack of food and clothes. She took the raw material produced by the goodman of the house and the stalwart sons, and from the flax made clothes and from the corn made food. Very little that was used in the house came from outside. The sugar was made from the hard maples, the meats were home-grown and home-cured, soap was made twice a year; candles to supplement the light from the blazing fireplace were dipped for daily use, or run for company candles. I remember the tall candlesticks with a curved hook projecting from the top rim. This was to catch into a staple driven into the edge of the mantel over the fireplace to bring the light nearer to one who would thumb the almanac or peruse a volume of sermons. All the clothing of the family, as well as household linen, was usually made in the home. A dress of cotton print was a greater

treasure a hundred years ago than a silk one is to-day. A busy, busy life they led, these sturdy forefathers and foremothers of ours; toil was tedious, but they were content, and life was sweet.

CHAPTER III

FIELD AND GARDEN CROPS IN THE EARLY DAYS

IT has been noted that the earliest settlements were along river valleys. This was most natural for two reasons: the rivers were the usual means of penetrating the wilderness, and the valleys through which they flowed were comparatively free from forests and were composed of a kind of soil more readily cultivated than the rocky areas on the hillsides.

After a field was stripped of trees and freed from stones, it was plowed and roughly harrowed. The only plow in use up to the early years of the nineteenth century was the unwieldy, heavy-beamed, wooden plow. It was not of a type suited to lifting boulders in its course through the soil. Perhaps this may account for the thoroughness with which fields on our hills were cleared

of loose stones and boulders. There were many traditions of "bees" where men and teams turned in to help a neighbor clear a field of rocks, which were afterwards utilized in making great walls about the fields. After the rude plow, the heavy, wooden, peg-toothed harrow was used for fitting the seed bed, and after seeding, the brush was dragged over to scratch in the seed. These were the only implements of tillage, excepting, of course, the strictly hand tools, in use until after the Revolution.

Corn was planted by hand, following the old Indian custom. A child often carried a sack of corn, walking up and down the plowed field and dropping in the traditional five kernels,

"One for the bug,
One for the crow,
One to rot
And two to grow."

Following the dropper came a stalwart man armed with the heavy, clumsy hoe, who drew the earth over the kernels and gave it three pats to fix the earth about them.

The sown crops needed little care till harvest, but progressive farmers, or those having many boys to keep employed, always hoed the corn. A man who in his

eighty-third year "raised 171 bushels, on the ear, of corn to the acre" told me that the plowing was poorly done in those days, but good crops were harvested because the land was new and rich. He also said that in his grandfather's day, after a piece was plowed and sown, "the farmer would cut down a good stout thorn bush and kinder hetchel in the seed." Flax, rye and wheat were "hetcheled" in, or scratched in with a brush. This brush generally consisted of birch trees set in a head. A long chain connected it with the ox yoke.

For many years the grain harvest was entirely dependent on the sickle—a slow, tedious process indeed, and not so very much lightened by the introduction of the grain cradle. It took a strong man with an unbreakable back and an alert eye to be a good cradler. Great are the stories told even to this day of the mighty feats of cradling performed by our fathers or grandfathers. The usual day's work was two or three acres, but there is a record of thirty acres in six days. It took a skilful swing of the cradle to cut the grain close to the ground and yet not close enough to hit the small stones and dull the scythe.

The corn crop, aside from the hoeing, was more easily raised than the small grains. The ears could be picked from the standing stalks, or more often the corn was cut, the stalks dried in the field and then either the unhusked ears picked off and carried to the barn, or else

the whole shocks of corn were thus stored. The husking of the corn gave opportunity for great frolics, and it is one of the few diversions of our ancestors which possesses romance enough to be popular among young people of the present time. Probably its popularity is due to the perpetual presence of red ears.

Such good things as were made of the corn!—mush or hasty pudding, well deserving the eloquent tribute paid to it by Joel Barlow in his "Ode to Hasty Pudding," as it came hot and fragrant from its long, slow cooking over the coals; hoe cake or ash cake, crisp and so brown and tasty around the edges. A delicious johnny-cake was made by mixing the meal with hot water, spreading it on a smooth oak board, covering the dough with thick cream and slightly tipping it up in front of the fire to cook, turning it as needed. The truly old-fashioned bean porridge was thickened with corn meal.

A lady who was born in 1818 once told me her explanation of the common saying, "He'll never set the Thames [or river] afire." The Indian meal used to be sifted into a long wooden bread tray, and from one end to the other ran a flat stick to support the coarse cloth-bottomed sieve or "tempse." A swift worker moving this quickly back and forth might possibly "set the tempse afire," but a slow person never would.

In most communities, in the early days, wheat was

seldom raised; and when it was, the flour, though not much like the product of the modern flour mills, was saved for extra occasions. The common bread was "rye and injun," made of rye meal and corn meal mixed.

The farm garden was probably meagerly supplied in those early days. Aside from the field crops of rye, buckwheat, wheat and corn, they had beans, peas, turnips, parsnips, and carrots. Potatoes were little used until after the Revolution. The native pumpkins and squashes were much appreciated by the early settlers and were utilized in astonishing ways, and what they couldn't eat fresh the good housewife dried for the winter's supply. Helen Evertson Smith, in her attractive book "Colonial Days and Ways," transcribes a letter describing Thanksgiving Day in 1779. The writer remarks that they have no beef and have not had for three years because it has all gone to the soldiers in the army. They had venison from a good red deer, huge chines of roast pork, a big roast turkey, a goose and two big pigeon pasties. "Then there was an abundance of good vegetables of all the old sorts and one which I do not believe you have seen yet. Uncle Simeon had imported the seed from England just before the war began and only this year was there enough for table use. It is called Sellery and you eat it without cooking. It is very good served with meats. . . . It has

to be taken up roots and all and buried in earth in the cellar through the winter and only pulled up when you want some of it to use."

A crop of the greatest importance, though one seldom raised now, was flax. Its culture was considered so important that the government directed that it be raised by each farmer, being sown in May and ready to pull by the last of July. A more beautiful sight than a field of blossoming flax, as blue as the heavens, can hardly be imagined. Although the flax was so quickly grown, yet its preparation for household use was slow and tedious. It was pulled by the roots and then ripped; that is, the seed pods were combed off by a ripple comb. These pods and seeds were caught on a sheet to furnish seed for another season. Rippling was done in the field and then the stalks were tied by the blossom ends and dried. When dry they were put in running water and left till the leaves rotted off, a process that took only a few days. This was called retting the flax. After retting it was dried and tied in bundles and then broken on the heavy flax brake to separate the fibers. This was very heavy work, properly belonging to the men of the farm. After breaking, it was "scutched or swingled" to take out the bark. The swingling had to be done on a dry day, and from the coarse refuse which was taken out, sacking could be made. Then the flax was ready to be hetcheled. This process consisted in

threshing small bunches of the straw across the teeth of a hetchel, thereby straightening the fibers and combing out the small pieces. As many as six hetchels were sometimes used if especially fine linen was desired, and it was astonishing that so small a quantity was left for further manipulation. But it was also surprising to see how much thread a small handful of good fiber would make. Thus after twenty handlings of the flax it was only ready to spin. When spun and reeled it was ready to be bleached in the thread, and various bleachings marked the finished product.

As more cattle came to be kept, it became necessary to house winter food for them. The great meadows produced native grasses, but the early settlers regarded these with scant favor and imported seed from England to improve the grass lands. This custom has been kept up, and now, nearly three hundred years since the first settlement in New England, there is, with the exception of *Phleum pratense,* the herd's grass or timothy, not a native grass deemed worthy of cultivation. And the botanists are trying to prove that the quaint little tradition of Timothy Herd and his native grass must go into tradition's scrap heap along with the stories of the apple and cherry tree.

However, there were big hay fields, and up to about 1850 these were all cut by hand. One aged farmer thus tells his first experience: "Say, I've got the first half

dollar I ever earned. I worked for a man in haying time a week for my board and earned that half dollar; we worked, I tell ye. We'd get up'n the morning, say at half past two, or soon's we c'u'd see, 'n' mow till five (I spread). Then I'd get up the cows and the women 'n' I'd milk the cows, 'n' we'd have breakfast. 'N' then we'd go at it ag'in, mowin' as hard's ever we c'u'd till ten. Then all hands, women 'n' all, would turn in 'n' rake and get in. I 'member that five men got in thirteen loads one day. It'd bother a mowing machine some to do that."

One means of enlarging the hay crop that was in use on many farms sixty to eighty years ago was by irrigation. Whenever a brook could be turned from its course and carried along some slope and then be turned over the grass fields, it was commonly done and the hay crop thus greatly improved. On many farms throughout the county may be found old irrigation ditches that have long been abandoned. In the first report of the State Board of Agriculture in 1866 will be found series of letters on what was then being done with irrigation in agriculture, and some of the best results are reported from Litchfield County.

Although the potato was a plant of American origin, it was not known to the natives of the North at the time this country was settled. It was introduced into England and on the European continent from our southern

colonies and probably came to New England with the soldiers who were engaged in the South during the Revolutionary War. At any rate, it was not widely grown in Connecticut until after this period. Early in the nineteenth century this crop became generally known through New England and every family grew at least what was wanted for home use. New land, well stored with decaying organic matter, proved ideal for this crop, and such soils frequently gave yields of 300 to 400 bushels an acre. Everything connected with the crop had to be done by hand labor. The usual method of planting was in hills, and by hand hoeing a mound of earth was piled around each hill about the time the tubers began to form. This was thought necessary to prevent the tubers from becoming exposed to the direct sunlight when they became large.

A much earlier crop than the potato was the turnip. This crop was grown in England and in the north of Europe long before the potato was cultivated in those countries. In this country it was early found to be a valuable feed for sheep. The coarse, dry fodders that were used in winter afforded little nutriment for the sheep and they often came through the winter gaunt and flabby. In order to put the ewes in good condition before the lambing season it was a common practice to feed them turnips during the latter part of the winter and in the early spring. Turnips were frequently sown

in the corn fields in midsummer, and made good growth through the fall, after the corn was cut.

Carrots were another root crop whose feeding value was early recognized. Before the days of patent butter colors, carrots were commonly fed to milking cows, when they were not on pasture feed, in order to impart a "June color" to the butter. Carrots, too, were commonly fed to horses before the days of western grain feeds. They were found to be especially valuable as a tonic and corrective.

America gave to the world two of the most useful food plants—corn and the potato—and in addition the worthless and yet commercially valuable weed, tobacco. This plant was found by the first settlers, being cultivated by the Indians in Virginia, and they taught the white man the use of the soothing narcotic. While tobacco was grown as a garden crop in Connecticut in colonial days, it was not cultivated for market until about 1830. It was grown in the Connecticut Valley for about twenty years before it came into the Housatonic Valley. Up to about thirty years ago the Connecticut broad leaf, introduced from Maryland into this State in the early thirties, was the leading variety grown for the trade. For the past thirty years the highest grade of Havana wrapper leaf has been grown with good profit on the sandy loam soils of the Housatonic Valley.

Many of the garden crops that are now so readily preserved for winter use by canning, were preserved in the early days by drying. Nearly every kitchen was festooned from the ceiling with strings of dried apples, sliced pumpkins and squash and red peppers, and often the shelves were covered with sweet corn, green peas, currants and sometimes with berries from the woods and fields. Before the days of railroads, when there was little travel from place to place, each family was sure to provide itself with a goodly store of everything that could add to the physical comfort of the family during the long winter season. The family constituted the only market for the farm products, and the needs of the family and of the live stock were a measure of the crops grown.

CHAPTER IV

FARMING TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS

AS has been incidentally noted in the preceding pages, the tools of the early settlers were of the simplest, crudest construction, and generally home-made. The farmer and the members of his household made the rakes, the forks, axe helves, shovels with wrought iron edges, flails, baskets, ox yokes, cheese presses, butter bowls and paddles. Even plow frames and drags were fashioned by the aid of adze, drawshave and knife, from the timber of the forest which stood almost at the farmer's door.

The first plows were heavy, clumsy affairs, almost wholly of wood except that the mouldboard was reinforced by bands of iron; and yet some of the older men say that "Grandfather with one of these heavy wooden

plows, drawn by a yoke of oxen, could do handsomer plowing than is done with the best sulky plow of to-day."

The mechanics of the plow were practically unknown until Thomas Jefferson made a study of the subject and constructed a plow along scientific lines, basing his work on the mechanical principles of the wedge, by which the plow operates. From this time (about 1800) the real improvements in the plow began. For years after these experiments the farmers were slow to appreciate the benefits which might result from them. They thought the iron plow would poison the soil, and so, for many years, they clung to the heavy wooden plow which varied but little in pattern from that used 3000 years ago. Some of these old plows were so heavy that several men were required to hold one in the soil. When the plow which Israel Putnam left in the furrow to answer the call of Bunker Hill was exhibited in Hartford, some twenty years ago, an up-to-date farmer was heard to say, "Well, I don't wonder he left it in the furrow to answer the call. He'd never have got there if he'd waited to finish plowing, and I don't know but death by a bullet would be full as easy as wearing yourself out bunting rocks with that thing."

After the land was prepared by the plow the seed was sown broadcast by hand, and in the very early times "kinder hetcheled in with a thorn bush set in a stick."

Then the seed was "firmed in" by the use of a heavy stone boat loaded with stones or by a wooden roller hewn by hand from a tree trunk, two feet or more in diameter.

The common form of harrow of one hundred years ago was the wooden framed, A-shaped harrow, set with hardwood pegs more than a foot in length. Of course, on our rocky hills it became necessary frequently to replace the teeth, as they soon became dulled so that they only slightly stirred the surface soil.

The grain was for years cut by the sickle, a method dating back to Bible times. From the *New England Farmer,* issue of July 21, 1849, the following is taken regarding "Grain Cradles":

"This is truly a labor-saving implement, doing work in a neat manner in good hands, and with great expedition, having decided advantages over the sickle with its slow, tedious, back-aching operation. The gain in dispatching the harvesting of grain is not merely doing it at less expense, but often the advantage is in performing it in the very nick of time and thereby saving the grain from a storm or from standing too late."

Although the first reapers had been patented prior to the introduction of the grain cradle, for many years they did not work satisfactorily. What proved to be the first satisfactory style of horse-power reaper was shown at the World's Fair in London in 1851, and this,

like nearly all of our improved farm machinery, was of American invention. It is only within the past thirty years that reapers have been used at all commonly on the stony side hill fields of Litchfield County.

After the grain was cradled it was bound in bundles, and when sufficiently dry was laboriously threshed by hand. A flail is one of the simplest of farming tools, and yet its manipulation requires great skill. Two smooth, rounded sticks are tied together by a thong, preferably of eel's skin, and the trick is to grasp the handle and then rhythmically thump out the grain with the swinging end and not thump your own head or the person of your threshing mate. Yankee ingenuity soon contrived an easier way of threshing, and water-power threshers early came into use. These did away with the labor of threshing by hand, but the straw was chopped up and spoiled. With the invention of the horse-power thresher, improvements were made so that the straw came out in shape to use as desired. One successful farmer, now living in Canaan, has recently told me that seventy years ago his father raised forty acres of oats, threshed them by "water thresher" and carted them to Winsted, where they were sold for twenty-six cents a bushel. In the early times the threshed grain was winnowed by pouring from one receptacle to another and letting the wind carry away the chaff. Or on a windy day the big barn doors were

opened and the threshed grain was tossed in the air by clean wooden scoop shovels and the lighter chaff blown away. In a collection of old implements I saw not long ago were several broad, shallow, close-woven baskets of splint work, which were labeled "Use Unknown." I may be mistaken, but I strongly suspect they were baskets woven for the special purpose of winnowing grain.

The cleaned grain was now ready for the mill. Among the earliest grants in nearly every township was the water privilege which was given on the condition that the grantee should grind all the grain for the community. It is probable that until after the establishment of grist mills not much use was made of the small grains. Indian corn was the staple grain in the earliest times and was ground into meal in the Indian fashion.

The corn when husked had to be shelled, and many and various were the devices employed to make the flinty kernels rattle off faster. The common method was to rub one ear across another in the hands and thus make them shell each other; but seekers after an easier way used to rake the well dried ears across the edge of a clean shovel or the sharp edge of a skillet. Yankee ingenuity soon devised a crude shelling machine, and those in use to-day are fashioned upon the same principle.

The shelled corn, in the absence of the power mill, might be pounded in a hollow stump made for the pur-

pose, and thus cracked or ground, or be crushed in a primitive hand mill. Where the Indian method of cracking in a stump was employed it was often set out of doors under a tree and the pestle tied to a bough to give it a rebound and save, for the down stroke, the weary arms of the miller.

Mr. W. E. Pettee of Salisbury invented the first spring-toothed harrow, one of the first steps in making farm work easy. By a peculiar process of tempering the steel he was able to construct a harrow with curved teeth that would spring back and pass over obstacles but not break. He also bought and brought to that town the first mowing machine.

Up to about 1850 all grain and hay had to be cut and handled entirely by hand. It was no uncommon thing to see six or eight mowers, with rhythmic swing, treading the hay fields from "sun up" to midday. The raking, too, was all done by hand, and it took every member of the household to gather up and haul in the afternoon what the men folks had laid down in the forenoon.

The first mowing machine was known as a one-wheeler—"awkward, heavy, and clumsy," it is characterized by a man who used one. Then came the Eureka machine, with high wheels and the cutter-bar working in front and between them. This type of machine is in use at the present time, though almost entirely superseded by the side cutter-bar type. In using

the Eureka machine the team was driven back and forth instead of around a piece.

To supplement the forks bought at the store the boys were supplied with forked sticks cut out of the forest and seasoned a little. In my childhood I well remember Father cutting a stout forked sapling for me to use in spreading the swath as I followed the mowers. Rakes, too, were contrived at home, and as the harvests became larger, the bull rake—having teeth eighteen inches long, set into a head more than six feet wide—was invented to use in raking after the load.

One of the earliest horse rakes consisted of wooden teeth more than six feet long set through a roller—the roller mounted on wheels. The teeth were pointed only on the side next the ground. When the teeth were full the thing twisted itself over and started the teeth on the other side picking up a mouthful. It was never very successful and was quickly forgotten when the iron-toothed rake with a foot dumper came into use.

From the settlement of the country down to the close of the eighteenth century there was practically no improved farm machinery, in the sense that we think of improved machinery to-day. The use of steam as a motive power was unknown until after Fulton's steamboat plied the Hudson River in 1809. Horse-power machinery was not known till near the middle of the last century. The chief motive power for all farm

work prior to seventy-five years ago was the ox team. Horses were little used for farm work, and so most of the hauling of heavy loads was done with the two-wheeled ox cart. Many of these were homemade and often the axles were made from hickory. Practically the only iron on many of the older carts was the tires. When the body of this two-wheeled cart was fitted with sloping racks extending many feet in all four directions, heavy loads of grain and hay could be hauled.

In the earliest days all of the long-distance travel was on horseback, as the bridle paths were the only highways and horseback travel was the common means of going from one settlement to another. When roads became more common heavy loads of farm produce were occasionally sent to the Sound at the south or the Hudson River at the west by the slow but sturdy ox teams. The extent to which the ox team came into use is illustrated by the account given by a man now living, whose uncle took an ox load of gun barrels from the place of casting at Mount Riga to Harper's Ferry, selling his oxen at the end of the journey and making the return trip on foot.

CHAPTER V

FRUITS AND FRUIT GROWING

ON page 455 of Barbour's "Historical Collection," printed in 1836, is this note: "There is an apple tree now standing on the farm of Mr. Solomon Marsh in Litchfield, supposed to be about 116 years old, and is now in a vigorous state. Its trunk, two feet from the ground, measures eleven feet five inches in circumference. The circumference of its branches is nearly eleven rods in extent. It bore in 1835 one hundred bushels of apples of a fine quality."

As Litchfield was sold for settlement in 1718, this apple tree, if the above record is accurate, must have been about the first thing planted by the first man who settled in the town. However that may be, its great size and vigor are sufficient warrant for the statement

that the hillsides of this county, with their natural fruit soils, furnish some of the best apple lands in the country.

Very little attention was at first paid to the selection of choice varieties of apples. This is evidenced by the fact that very old orchards of the present day often contain none of the choicer kinds. Most of the very oldest trees around abandoned homesteads bear only native fruit, except possibly here and there a branch where top-grafting was practised after the tree had attained considerable size. I recall one old, decaying orchard in Salisbury where I have searched for several years for grafted varieties of fruit, but without avail, although the trees have nearly all borne abundantly. Little use was made of the fruit as food in the early days of the colonists. But cider was made and was stored and used in great quantities on every farm. It was taken to church to drink with the hearty luncheon with which all fortified themselves in the noon hour between the long discourses of morning and afternoon. In one case, as previously recorded, even the minister did not hesitate to increase his meager salary by engaging in this traffic, for he was "hired for fifty pounds of lawful money and the privilege of running the town cider mill."

Stills for cider brandy, too, were common everywhere, and large quantities of the cider were converted

into this strong intoxicant. When it was desired to save the expense or the trouble of making this beverage, what was said to be a good substitute was made by freezing cider that had been fermenting in barrels for several months. Then the brandy would collect at the center unfrozen, and by boring a hole with a long auger the concentrated product could be drawn off.

From Orcutt's "History of Torrington" the following notes have been gleaned: "Many of the early settlers, having been reared in those parts of the State where apples had become an important commodity in the enjoyment of life, were led, in the early stages of the settlement, to give much attention to the planting of this kind of tree. This is very evident from the large quantity of apples and cider found here in 1770 and afterwards. In 1773 there were four cider mills on the west side, and at least one brandy still. An apple orchard would not reach any considerable maturity under twenty years, and therefore the planting of such orchards must have been one of the great enterprises of the town."

T. S. Gold, in his "Reminiscences," writes: "Fruits at the beginning of the century were few from grafted or budded trees. I have a single tree, a 'Seeknofurther,' grafted near the ground, the last survivor of an orchard which is said to have been planted about 1760. A few Pearmain trees were also in the orchard;

the rest were native fruit—two so good we have perpetuated them by grafting."

"Peaches, good, bad and indifferent, grew abundantly from the stones planted in the fence corners of the garden or orchard, till the yellows came about fifty years ago and swept them all away."

"One hundred years ago the culture of small fruits for market was unknown, but they crept into city and village gardens. Sixty years ago President Day, of blessed memory, could be seen from the Yale dormitories hoeing his own strawberry bed. Professional men were good gardeners and the best farmers. The introduction of new and choice fruits was due to them."

The doctor, the minister and the lawyer always had their farm to eke out the meager incomes of their professions. As they were about the only members of a community who indulged in the luxury of books and papers, they alone were in a position to know what new fruits and vegetables were being introduced from other countries, and they were ever ready to test out interesting introductions.

Nearly all of our improved fruits are of old-world origin. The wild apple was brought to this country by the first settlers, and our improved varieties had their origin in what are known as chance seedlings. It is a well known fact that apples, peaches, cherries and some other fruits will, when grown from seed, occasionally

develop a tree of choice fruit. By grafting or budding from this natural selection a new variety is disseminated, and if especially choice it finds widespread use. Within a few years the original Rhode Island greening tree was still standing, just over the Connecticut line; not many years ago the original Baldwin tree stood in its native town in Massachusetts, and until within a few years there existed the original northern spy tree in western New York. To-day the spot is marked by a monument erected by the many admirers of this choice variety. It may not be amiss to relate here the tradition that the seed from which this choice apple was developed was taken to western New York from the Holmes farm in Salisbury, Connecticut. A few years before his death the owner of this farm told the writer that he still had on his farm a tree the fruit of which closely resembled the northern spy. At any rate, authentic records of the origin of this choice variety show that the seed was taken from Salisbury, Connecticut, to western New York.

Grafting and budding, as means of propagating fruit trees, were known long before the settlement of this country—grafting at least having been practised by the Romans. The method of root grafting of the small seedlings is probably of comparatively recent origin, as most of the older trees show evidence of having been top-grafted quite a distance above the ground. This is

what causes the distinct enlargement on many apple tree trunks. The scion, which was inserted by means of the cleft graft, often grew more rapidly than the original stock, making the enlargement or bulge at the point of union.

Choice varieties of apples and pears began to be propagated shortly after the American Revolution. Aside from the northern spy, to whose Connecticut origin reference has already been made, another fine commercial apple was originated in Litchfield County. The Hurlburt stripe, or Hurlburt, is a well known late fall variety that originated on the farm of Lemuel Hurlburt of Winchester, and is first recorded in the works on fruit about 1850.

The growing and selling of nursery stock became an established business about one hundred years ago. As the people began to select improved varieties and the nurseries began to propagate and disseminate them, every family soon made a practice of surrounding their dwelling with choice varieties of pears, peaches, plums, quinces and cherries, to say nothing of the smaller fruits, such as grapes, currants and gooseberries.

The native berry fruits, such as the strawberry, the blackberry, the huckleberry, the blueberry and the raspberry, were common everywhere, either in meadow, swamp, on hillside pastures or newly cleared forest areas; and so, little attention was given to the garden

culture of any of these fruits until within the past sixty years. As far as known, the strawberry was the only berry fruit brought under cultivation prior to 1850.

In 1802 Mr. Blakesley of Plymouth writes: "My method of making a nursery is to separate my apple seeds from the pomace in the fall of the year, let the seeds freeze one night in the latter part of the winter, plant them in my garden in the spring, and after they have grown five or six inches high, I transplant them and find they do much better than when raised in the usual way." This would seem to show that it was this man's practice to set his orchard from seedlings of the first season's growth. These were doubtless grown in the orchard until one to three inches in diameter and were then top-grafted. Mr. Samuel Bushnell (the elder), who became famous as an orchardist in Salisbury near the middle of the past century, made a practice of growing his seedling trees by planting the seeds in his corn field with the corn.

In the earlier reports of agricultural societies in the State there are interesting notes on the methods in use in handling apple orchards. One man in this county speaks of using corn cobs about his trees, while his son had an orchard "on which he put stones around his trees at a small distance from the trunk and thinks them beneficial to his orchard." The same writer concludes with the statement that "I have never, however, found

anything so good for my apple trees as top-tow laid on the land near the trees." What "top-tow" is can only be conjectured from the knowledge of the fact that flax was grown and retted on nearly every farm, and the fiber was commonly called "tow." The coarse bark of the plant was of little value for cloth and it seems most probable that this got the name of "top-tow," and being a waste product, could be used as a mulch around small trees.

In a long list of questions submitted for answer in the "Transactions of the State Agricultural Society," published in 1802, the following will indicate the trend of thought relating to apples in those days:

"What kind of apples afford the best cyder?"

"What is the best management of apples to prepare them for cyder?"

"Is it beneficial to house them in heaps until mellowed, and will this method better the quality of the cyder?"

"Are grafting and innoculation [budding] of fruit trees in general use and the best method known?"

"Have any means or methods been found successful in destroying the worms that annoy the trees or preventing the millars from ascending the trees?"

The ravages of insects are not confined to recent experience. One of the worst periodic pests was the canker worm. In the "History of Ancient Woodbury"

it is recorded that "in 1791 the canker worms devoured the orchards not only here but all over the northeastern states, and their ravages were repeated the two following years. Orchards standing in stiff clay soil and in low grounds which are wet in the spring escaped, but on all kinds of light and dry soil the trees were almost as dry on the first of June as the first of January. The same insect has this year [1853] attacked the orchards in the same manner and with the same result. The trees, the fifteenth of June, were as brown as in autumn, and almost entirely stripped of foliage. The fruit has been entirely ruined, although at present writing [August] the trees have again put on a fresh garment of foliage. The eye of man could not well behold a denser shower of vermin than these trees presented."

One of the interesting prejudices of one hundred years ago, relative to orchard management, will strike the present-day fruit grower as queer, if not amusing. This was the prejudice that prevailed against the growing of clover in the orchard. Several writers of that time refer to having seen or experienced injury from growing red clover in the orchards. One man in this county reports that "he liked to have ruined his orchard by raising crops of red clover on the land," but that when, on seeing his trees decaying, he conjectured the cause, "he left off raising the clover in his orchard, when it soon recovered." Another man reports similar

injury, but adds that when he began pasturing the clover the injury ceased, and his conjecture was, that "by carefully feeding it to keep it from having any bloom, it does not injure as it manifestly did when suffered to come to such maturity as to fit it for mowing."

To-day orchardists find that there is nothing more valuable to grow in the orchard than clover, providing, of course, it is grown at the right time of the year and not allowed to check the tree growth early in the season. The trouble experienced in the early days was probably due to the serious check given the growth of the trees in the early summer, mainly due to the large use of soil water by the clover. The present-day orchardist cultivates his orchard lands the early part of the season, when the trees are growing rapidly, and thus conserves soil moisture; and then he often sows clover, during the middle or late summer, in order to check the growth of wood, so that it will harden before winter. The clover is generally plowed under early the next spring and serves as a fertilizer for the trees.

In the "Report of Greenwood's (Litchfield County) Agricultural Society for 1845" will be found the following record of varieties reported on by Thomas A. Miller of Torrington, including eight varieties of winter apples: "two varieties of Pippins, the Seeknofurther, Roxbury Russett, Gilliflower, Pounder, Peck's Sweet and Long Island Red Cheek, all fine specimens

of their kind." Several of these will be recognized as well known varieties of the present day.

There was also a specimen of an apple by Thomas M. Clark, "evidently a pounder." With this apple there was a newly invented machine for picking apples consisting of a hoop made of wire attached to a handle with a sack suspended from the hoop resembling an eel pot. "The committee think it a valuable instrument for gathering choice fruit. Donated by the above mentioned Clark."

There are now a few bearing apple orchards in the county that are sixty to seventy-five years of age. Most of these are grafted fruit, which shows that attention was generally drawn to the value of the apple as food only within about the last hundred years.

Practically all of the best varieties of to-day, however, were grown more than sixty years ago. In the Patent Office Report for 1859 (in which division the first reports on agriculture were made by our government), T. S. Gold reports twenty varieties of apples, and among them nearly all of the leading varieties of the present day. The same impression of decay and decline in orchards seemed to have prevailed then as to-day, for Mr. Gold reports: "Within the past twenty years, orchards in this part of the State have declined rapidly, many old trees dying or ceasing to bear good fruit. Decay dates from the ice storm of the winter of

1855–6. Within the past ten years I have planted five hundred trees, most of which are in tolerably thrifty condition and some are beginning to bear."

The most extensive bearing orchards in the county to-day are found on the Gold Farm on Cream Hill in Cornwall, and in the towns of Morris, Litchfield, Salisbury and Bridgewater. The fact has been well established that the higher hilltops of Connecticut, with their heavy loam and clay-loam soils, produce apples of unsurpassed flavor and keeping qualities. The higher elevations give less trouble from fruit diseases than the valleys, while the good air drainage draws the cold air down the hill slopes so that less injury results from late spring frosts. The air of the hills, being cooler than that of the valleys, causes the fruit to mature more slowly, and this gives a firmness and crispness that add greatly to the flavor and keeping qualities. There is no comparison in flavor between the fruit of our Connecticut hills and that of even the famous fruit region of Oregon. For several years T. S. Gold of Cornwall sent his apples to London, with a market more exacting than that of most cities in this country. To-day the fruit from this farm finds a ready sale in a select trade, mostly in New Haven and Bridgeport.

Even the sons of sunny Italy, whose love of fruits runs back through many generations, have recently migrated to our western Connecticut hillsides, where

they are likely to prove to the native stock that Litchfield County hills have greater possibilities in fruit culture than we have ever dreamed. The hilltops of Salisbury are already being dotted with apple and peach orchards and the lower slopes with vineyards that give promise of bloom and fruitage beyond the highest expectations of the native population.

CHAPTER VI

CATTLE AND THE DAIRY

VERY little farm livestock was kept in the early days of the Colonies, though before the time Litchfield County was settled enough had been imported from England to furnish draft cattle for work and cows to produce enough milk to meet the home demands for fresh milk and for butter and cheese. There were comparatively few areas suitable for hay, which was so necessary to provide food for the livestock during the long winters. As the fields were cleared of forest and later of rocks, the amount of fodder grown for winter use was increased, and the number and variety of farm animals were gradually increased.

The first barns were hewn-timber structures, loosely covered, built mainly for the shelter of grain and

fodder rather than for the comfortable housing of the cattle, and yet these heavy-timbered barns lasted for years. Though I do not know the oldest in the county by any means, yet I know of one standing, sound and good, which sheltered a part of a company of Hessians when they marched down through Litchfield County after the defeat at Saratoga in 1777. The main structure was flanked, oftentimes, by open sheds where the cattle and sheep could take shelter and be foddered.

As we have noted, the early plan of settlement arranged for the commons around which were the homestead plots, with an outlying farm to be later improved and reclaimed. After the danger from Indians and wild beasts became lessened it is probable that the outlying area was often utilized as summer pasturage for young stock—a custom still continued.

The town of Woodbury early set aside a common pasture. "At a lawful town meeting the 8th of March, 1705, it was voted and agreed that all the bare hill and ragland from the highway to the westside through poplar meadow, down to the highway from Whiteoak through Sawteeth, we say all that is now common land unlaid out, is and shall be sequestered land for common, for the feed of sheep and other cattle forever, for the use of the inhabitants in gen'l." A pretty extensive pasture, and yet, if it is still "forever kept," it must be all too small for the flocks and herds of Woodbury.

Helen Evertson Smith says that in 1672 the bequest of a cow and heifer was esteemed of more than ordinary value. Trumbull gives the value of a good milch cow about 1640 as thirty pounds. The work of a "paire of Oxen with tacklin" was held to be worth two shillings and five pence for "six howers" in winter and "eight howers" the rest of the year, eight hours making the full day's work for cattle except in heavy upland plowing, when "six howers" were considered enough. "A man's working hours were reckoned from sun to sun in summer and from six to six in winter; but the cattle were more precious than men."

For a long time there seems to have been little attempt at butter making, and in the early days so much salt was put into it as to make it scarcely palatable as an article of diet. In one of Mrs. Austin's books of early New England life, she makes the house-mother put a pound ball of butter on a spit, and, deftly turning it at exactly the right distance from the fire, constantly sprinkle it with flour until it is a great brown crackling toothsome mass, which she serves as a hearty treat for her goodman's supper.

When the supply of stock was increased enough to warrant, butter and cheese were made in the summer to supply the family for the year. Cattle kept for dairy purposes were at first limited to the needs of the family. The family cows were not expected to produce milk

more than six or seven months after calving, and only at that season of the year when nature provided an abundance of pasture feed. All the grains grown were needed to support the family. The coarse fodders that were harvested whenever the work could be done, were the chief food of livestock. The haying season generally lasted from the time the rye and wheat harvest was finished until the corn was ready to cut. With loosely constructed stables and with woody, coarse fodders that could barely sustain life as the main source of feed, such a thing as winter dairying was never heard of, and the good housewife was fortunate if she got milk enough in winter to feed the young children.

In the early days of the colonists there was no improved livestock in the sense that we think of improved stock to-day. The cattle and sheep brought over from England, where they were accustomed to a milder climate, did not prosper as in their native country. It is said that the farm animals that were raised here, for the first two or three generations, were smaller and not as well developed in their useful qualities as those imported. This was probably due to the severe climate, poor shelter, rough pastures and the poor quality of the dried fodder. The natural grasses were not as nutritious as those later introduced from Europe, and the clovers were at first entirely unknown, as this was a crop of European origin.

In order to be able to recognize his cattle each settler had his "ear mark," which was registered in the town records, and in case an unknown animal was found it was reported and a description was "posted" for recognition by the owner.

While distinct breeds of cattle, sheep and horses were being developed in England and other European countries during the middle part of the eighteenth century, we have no records of any of these breeds being imported to our shores until near the close of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century. Litchfield County can justly claim credit for early becoming interested in the introduction and development of two breeds of improved stock that proved of great value to the country. These were Devon cattle and Merino sheep. A few specimens of the famous breed of cattle that later made Litchfield County famous for its fine working oxen, were first brought to Maryland in 1793 or 1794, and a few years later Lemuel Hurlburt of Winchester bought a famous bull and a little later several heifers from these early importations. These choice specimens were the foundation stock of a valuable herd, and their progeny was gradually disseminated throughout the county and the State. The Devons proved to be hardy, rugged animals, well suited to our rigorous climate, and many of them had good dairy qualities. Their distinctively valuable quality,

however, was their adaptability for use as working cattle. Nearly every male calf was saved and reared for this purpose. The success attained in subduing our rough hill lands can be ascribed, in no small degree, to the sturdy qualities of this valuable breed. They proved to be not only rugged but teachable, quick in action, and very strong in proportion to their size, all of which were decidedly valuable qualities for working cattle.

Near the middle of the nineteenth century Litchfield County fairs were famous for their fine "strings" of working oxen It was no uncommon occurrence to see town "strings" of more than one hundred pairs shown at the fair at the county seat. Of these cattle the handsomest and most admired were the Devons because of their solid red color and fine forms. Choice herds of Devons were also developed on the farm of Mr. Peck at Watertown and by the elder Dr. Buell of Litchfield. The latter herd has never lost its identity, as the present Dr. Buell keeps up a valuable dairy of this breed and still finds ready sale for all the steers he can raise. This herd to-day shows exceptionally good milking qualities. The milk is above medium richness as regards fat and is considered very valuable as a food for infants and invalids.

In the early days every farmer raised his own beef and pork, and it was no uncommon thing for the farmer with a large family to "put down" five or six barrels of

pork, besides packing or freezing several beeves for home consumption. Beef cattle could be grown and fattened on the hill pastures, and a little late-cut hay or corn fodder would carry them over winter. Improved types of beef cattle, however, were little known until after the first quarter of the last century. Following the introduction of the Devons, soon came fine specimens of the Shorthorns, and later the Herefords, commonly known as the "white faces." These two breeds did much to improve the quality of the beef, and it was no uncommon sight to see large droves of sleek beef cattle being driven from this county to New Haven and Bridgeport for use in these markets, or for shipment to New York.

The Durham breed of cattle (later known as Shorthorns) had beef qualities that early led to their use on many farms. It was found, too, that some families or strains of this breed were excellent milkers, especially for the first six months of lactation, and many good dairies of grade Shorthorns were developed in the towns of Goshen, Litchfield, Watertown and Woodbury. The Ayrshires, too, early attracted attention for their heavy milking qualities, and large herds of the grades of these two breeds were early developed in connection with the cheese industry.

About the middle of the last century, following the settling of central and northern New York and Ver-

mont, the "droving" (driving) of young cattle from these States each fall became a big business. They were commonly brought to Connecticut as two-year-olds, and by feeding one winter with coarse fodder and grain they made a sufficient gain to pay the "cost of keep," were the right age to be fattened on the rich pastures the next season, and were ready to be marketed early the following fall. There was always a demand for beef, and beef cattle could be driven long distances to market, while there was relatively little demand for dairy products and poor facilities for their transportation. This gave cattle of the beef type a prominence over what we now know as the dairy type. Down to 1850 nearly every family living in the more populous centers kept at least one cow and thus produced their own milk and butter. Such a thing as the village milkman was unknown except in large cities of the State, such as Hartford and New Haven. There was little demand for milk and butter in the larger towns until after the middle of the last century.

The domestic cheese industry, however, early found an important place in our farming. Our southern coast towns and the West Indies made a market for cheese that this country could supply more easily than England, and with the development of the coast shipping trade there was opened up a good market for cheese. Then, too, cheese was a product that could be held

many months without deterioration and would remain firm for long shipment to warm climates. Butter, on the other hand, would deteriorate with age and could not be handled at all for a southern trade except in winter.

For many years the making of butter was limited almost entirely to the family supply and was confined to the months of June and September. The butter from the spring and early summer pasturage was esteemed of especially fine flavor, while that of the cooler months of the fall was thought to have better keeping qualities. As the use of bacteria cultures had not been discovered, their part in the production of fine flavor was not yet recognized. When one considers the conditions of barn and stable, the wonder grows that butter would keep at all. One reason why good butter was made was doubtless because during the butter-making season the cattle were kept in the open practically the whole time. Even the milking was done in the barnyard or in a small enclosure in a corner of the pasture. Thus there was little chance for contamination by undesirable forms of bacteria, and the housewife had discovered the necessity of scrupulous cleanliness in the case of all milk utensils in order to make good butter.

The milk was drawn into open wooden pails, strained and set in wooden buckets or later in earthen crocks or tin pans. Sometimes a spring house or milk room was

provided, but quite as often the receptacles were set on the cooler side of the buttery, if it had one, and were left undisturbed until the milk was lobbered. Then the thick, leathery cream was taken off with a spoon, or, in the very early days, with a shell. It was stored in a stone crock to await churning day.

The earliest type of churn in Connecticut was probably merely a deep crock, and the mass was stirred with a wooden paddle until the fat grains separated from the milk. A little later came the tall dasher churn, worked up and down; then the churn with revolving dasher. Mr. E. S. Stevens of East Canaan has a churn which has four wooden paddles inside to beat the cream. It was bought from a man who brought it on his back all the way from Newburg, N. Y. When the butter came the mass was taken out and put into a wooden bowl and worked either with the hands or with wooden paddles until all the buttermilk was extracted.

Various old-time suggestions as to the making and keeping of butter follow:

Transactions of the Agricultural Society, printed in 1802.

"To Preserve Butter: Take butter made in May or beginning of June and, being perfectly sweet, roll it in rolls of two or three pounds; after carefully extracting the milk and properly seasoning it, put into the vessel

in which it is to be kept. Make a brine, boil it, and skim it till it begins to crystallize and when it is perfectly cold cover the butter with it and carefully cover the vessel from the air; it will keep good during the summer. M. CHANEY."

From the Report of the Connecticut State Agricultural Society, 1859.

"Two tubs butter presented by E. A. Phelps were manufactured in Colebrook, Litchfield County, churned from the milk. The dairy consists of twelve cows; the churning is performed every day. The churn used is a large dasher churn holding forty to fifty gallons, which, with a thermometer, combines all the advantages of any churn now in use. Butter taken from the churn is washed in pure spring water, which does away with the necessity of working the butter too much—the great fault of most butter makers. No ingredient is used except pure rock salt to give it flavor or for its preservation. The tubs used are made of white hemlock, a kind of timber devoid of all flavor and perfectly sweet. The tubs are soaked some three weeks in a strong brine before packing. When they are full they are set away in a common cellar and the butter is marketed in November and December to private families. No cheese is made from the dairy and no difference is made in price

throughout the season. I have eaten butter of this manufacture two years old, sweet and good. The churning is performed from twelve to fourteen hours after milking. *The hand is never allowed to come in contact with the butter.* E. A. P."

"P.S. I know of no other dairy in the State where butter is made by the same process."

From the Same Report.

"LAKEVILLE, CONN.

"To the Committee of Conn. Agrl. Soc. on Butter:

"This butter was made from a dairy of five cows. Cows feed in old pasture, stabled and soiled night and morning with grass or corn fodder. Milk kept in temperature varying from fifty-five to sixty degrees. Churned at sixty degrees. Milk is skimmed before sour; cream churned every other day while still sweet. Salted, at first working, with three-fourths of an ounce to a pound. Butter worked three times, being careful not to work it enough at any time to make it oily.

"MRS. ASHBEL LANDON."

During the hot part of the summer, when there was increasing difficulty in getting butter "to come," the housewife utilized the milk supply for making

cheese. Every farm was a small cheese factory. The milk was brought in at night, strained and set. Very frequently the cream was taken off in the morning and used either for making a small churning of butter or in cooking.

If the cream was not taken off it was thoroughly stirred in and the milk was then brought to a lukewarm heat. The morning's milk was strained and left until the animal heat escaped, then the two were mixed and as much rennet added as would turn it to a curd. I find no definite measure for the amount of rennet. The experienced cheese makers must have known subconsciously when they had enough for the amount of milk. The curd was supposed to set in one-half to three-quarters of an hour; then the smooth white mass was cut into cubes with a broad-bladed wooden knife. After cutting, the curd was left for half an hour or so to let the whey separate, and then the whey was dipped off and the curd again cut, this time usually into cubes about an inch in size. After a good deal of the whey had been dipped off the curd was ladled into a cheese basket to drain. The draining was quite complete. Then the curd was returned to the tub and thoroughly scalded with hot whey "until it squeaked," when it was ready for the final draining, the salting and the press. The rule for salt varies from "salt to taste" to "a teacupful of Liverpool salt to ten pounds."

The presses were usually of the lever type and the weight at the end of the lever varied with the size of the cheese. The hoop of wood was placed on the grooved board, then filled with curd, the "runner" put on top, then the board, hoop, and cheese were slipped under the press. The cheese remained in press from twenty-four to forty-eight hours. After coming from the press it was oiled all over with melted butter, a cheese-cloth band put around it and folded neatly on the cheese-cloth at the top and the bottom. The cheese was then ready to set away to ripen in a cool, dark room—but it must be "turned" every day and rubbed with melted butter—a considerable task when the cheeses were many and weighed, as they often did, from twenty-five to thirty pounds.

One of the earliest ventures in the marketing of cheese was made from Goshen—that hill town which afterwards became so noted for the amount and quality of its cheese. In the fall of the year 1792 Alexander Norton, being sent south on account of his health, purchased, to sell again in the southern markets, several thousand pounds of cheese. The venture was so successful that he continued in the business. The matter of suitable packages for the cheese gave considerable trouble. Up to this time, there being only a small local market, no package had been required. At first he used sets of shelves, but these not being satisfactory, he had

timber carved into the proper shape and cheese casks made. These later came into quite general use, but were not as satisfactory as the round boxes afterwards made for the carrying of twin cheeses, and now very common. This demand for a suitable carrying package for the cheese gave rise to a new industry, and small shops were built for the express purpose of making cheese boxes. We find that in 1839 Winchester reports the manufacture of 4000 cheese boxes valued at $600. Norfolk the same year reports the value of cheese boxes made as $9500, or over 60,000 boxes if they were rated the same as those made in Winchester.

Annatto was first used for coloring cheese in Goshen. It was used in the manufacture of cheese in the home of this same Alexander Norton who established the southern cheese trade. At first it was used by rubbing it through a fine cloth into the milk, the present method of dissolving it not being known. The more highly colored cheese resulting from the use of annatto was much sought after, always bringing several cents more per pound than the uncolored cheese. The cheese industry grew from 1807, and for many years amounted to 270,000 pounds a year, thus bringing to the farmers a considerable income.

In 1808 a pineapple cheese from Holland being brought to Goshen from New York by a member of the Norton family, Lewis N. Norton began to make experi-

ments in producing a similar cheese. With appliances of his own invention he commenced the manufacture of pineapple cheese in 1809, and it was continued from father to son on the same spot for nearly one hundred years. The pineapple cheese industry has now gone from Litchfield County but is still carried on in New York State by members of the Norton family.

The method of manufacture in brief is as follows: The milk is heated and rennet added; the curd is put in small hoops and the hoops are put into a frame thirty to forty feet long and are lightly pressed by end pressure. When pressed and still mellow they are given their peculiar shape by the curd being put in a small net and hung up. The net gives both the shape and the pineapple markings. After being thoroughly dried they are covered with a peculiar varnish which renders them impervious to the air and insures their keeping in any climate.

The manufacture of cheese was by no means confined to Goshen, although it stands as pioneer in that especial branch of farming. In 1839 Winchester reports to the Secretary of State 285,000 pounds of cheese, Barkhamsted 70,000, and Norfolk 283,735. The transportation of so bulky a product from the hill towns was quite a problem and for years could be solved only by team cartage. A report has come to me of a man, now deceased, who, in his youth, drove a mule team from

Winchester to New Haven, thus getting to the coastwise ships part of Winchester's output of cheese.

It would hardly be fitting to close this discussion on dairy products without some reference to the enormous industry of condensed milk which had its origin in Litchfield County, although the data to draw from, in spite of inquiry and research, are meager. The first condensed milk was prepared in a very small way in a building still standing near the railway station in Winsted. The Borden Condensed Milk Company was organized in 1863 and continued doing business in Winsted until 1866. Afterward A. M. Gale established a condensary at what is now known as Burrville, in the town of Torrington. The old accounts note that he came to this particular place because of the abundance of pure cold water. Mr. Gale put up milk under the first patent for condensing milk and employing sugar in the process. The business was soon after removed to Dutchess County, N. Y.

CHAPTER VII

SHEEP AND WOOL

ALTHOUGH the records of livestock brought by the first settler to Litchfield County are very meager, it is no doubt true that sheep formed part of the early possessions of every farmer. To a people living in a frontier land, where winters were long and tedious and the distance from centers of trade was great, the matter of warm clothing was second only to the question of food. As the sheep would furnish material for both food and clothing, attention was soon turned to increasing the flocks.

Notwithstanding the value of the sheep to the farmer and his family, the flocks were so slowly increased that in 1660 they were freed from taxes and ground was ordered cleared for their pasturage. Ten

years afterwards, "for the encouragement of rayseing sheepe," the general courts of the Colony ordered that every male person in the several plantations, fourteen years old and upwards, that was not a public officer, should work one day in June of each year in cutting down and clearing the underwood "so that there may be pasture," and the townsmen in the respective towns were "to appoint the places where they should worke, in the highways or commons or other places agreed upon." Heavy fines were threatened upon those who failed to comply with this ruling.

Naturally the land was full of wild beasts which found mutton very much to their taste, and to rid the forests of these pests liberal bounties were offered by the various towns for the killing of wolves and bears. As late as 1766 it is recorded that a bear appeared in the city of Hartford and was killed in the south meadow. If bears boldly walked into the streets of the largest towns, what must have been their boldness in the more remote districts! After several years of settlement, the nuisance of wild animals being somewhat abated, the General Assembly frugally repealed the public bounty law, with the result that the ardor of the hunt subsided. Naturally the wolves increased, and in 1776 we find the following bill passed by the General Assembly:

"Upon the memorial of Jacob Beach, of Goshen,

showing to this Assembly that since the repeal of the late law granting a premium for destroying wolves, they have increased and done much damage by killing sheep in said Goshen, and consequently, he having expended considerable time and money for that purpose, hath since the first day of May, last, taken, killed and destroyed three grown wolves in said Goshen; praying for such a sum of money to be paid him out of the public treasury of this State as he would have been entitled to receive had said act never been repealed: as per memorial on file: *Resolved by this Assembly,* that the memorialist have liberty to receive the sum of twelve pounds lawful money and the Treasurer of this State is hereby ordered and directed to pay the same accordingly."

In 1786 a pack of four wolves descended on the settlement of Norfolk and eighty men went out to hunt them, fearing their depredations on the flocks. These two incidents indicate something of the natural drawbacks to the sheep industry from its beginning.

That dogs were a menace to flocks even in those early days is evident in the ruling that in 1736 gave to the "sheep selectman" authority to kill dogs. In one town, at the town meeting held April 26, 1742, it was "Voted that there shall be three pounds drawn out of the town treasury for every grown wolf that shall be killed within the limits of this town, and for every wolf whelp thirty

shillings. And it is also voted that whosoever shall kill any ratel snak or snaks within the town and bring rattles shall have one shilling for every such snak."

A possible reason for the lack of importation of a better breed of sheep or new blood to improve the old stock is hinted at in an essay by Dr. Jared Eliot, grandson of the Apostle to the Indians. He says: "A better breed of sheep is what we want. The English breed of Cotswold sheep cannot be obtained, at least not without great difficulty, for wool and live sheep are contraband goods which all strangers are prohibited from carrying out on pain of having their right hand cut off."

Following the act of 1660, which made sheep exempt from taxation, were other public acts, such as the paying of a bounty for woolen cloth and the exempting of sheep from seizure for debt, which were designed to favor the growth of the sheep industry.

Many stories both inspiring and pathetic are told in connection with the making of homespun in the early times. Although not a Litchfield County incident, the following will illustrate the straits and the enterprise which served to go toward the making of men who made history. "A dozen sheep and one cow comprised the stock, and to her yield of milk the latter added her service to the plow. Corn bread, milk and bean porridge were the staples of diet. The father being incapacitated by illness, the mother did the work in the

house and helped the boys in the fields. Once, in mid-winter, one of the boys needed a new suit, and there was neither money nor wool in the house. The mother sheared the half-grown fleece from a sheep and in a week it was made into clothing. The shorn sheep, so generous in such need, was protected by a wrapping made of braided straw. They lived four miles from the meeting house, to which the mother and her two boys walked every Sunday. The boys became Samuel and Eliphalet Nott, one a famous preacher, one the president of Union College."

The same way out of a similar difficulty is related of one of the Litchfield County towns, with the difference that the shorn sheep was provided with a dress fashioned from an old blanket.

In the special report on the "Sheep Industry of the United States" it is stated: "It is probable that the first sheep brought to this country were of the kind common to England at the time and were the Wiltshire and Romney Marsh, the Herefordshire, the Norfolk and the old Southdown or Sussex sheep; at least all the characteristics of these breeds could be seen in the different flocks in the eastern States at the beginning of the present century [1801]." The late T. S. Gold characterizes the sheep of the early part of the century in Litchfield County as being "long-legged, scraggy animals, with thin, coarse wool," and adds: "It naturally

follows that the choice, fine-wooled sheep became immensely popular."

To Colonel David Humphreys, of New Haven, is due the credit of bringing to Connecticut the first Merino sheep, the introduction of which did so much for the wool industry of the State. So great a benefit was this considered that the fact is recorded upon his tombstone in an eloquent Latin epitaph, which states that he was a man of great learning, member of various distinguished societies, a friend of Washington and ambassador to the courts of Portugal and Spain. The Latin runs: *"Iberia reversus natale solum vellere vere aureo ditavit"*; translated, "On his return from Spain he enriched his native land with the true golden fleece."

The Merino, an especially fine-wooled sheep, is thought to have come from Asia Minor, following the line of civilization along the shores of the Mediterranean into Spain. For years the breed was cherished in Spain as one of its choicest treasures, and as long as Spain retained her power as a nation the exportation of the sheep was forbidden. A few were smuggled out of the borders, and some were given as kingly favors to various countries. A detailed account of the importation of the Merinos into this country, however interesting it might be, would be too long for these pages. Suffice it to say that the introduction of this breed into the farming regions of northwestern Connecticut stimulated,

more than anything else, the wool industry. Colonel Humphreys, himself a woolen manufacturer, realized more keenly than the average farmer the necessity of producing a finer grade of wool. The first importation, in 1803, was about seventy head and these were leased or rented out to farmers. They were used mainly in trying to improve the native sheep, but owing to our cold, rugged climate and the poor shelter afforded, the pure-bred animals did not prosper at first, and for some reason failed to impress their good qualities on the native stock, when crossed with them. Larger importations were made between 1808 and 1810, and some of these laid the foundation of valuable strains of American Merinos, especially the Delaine Merinos that later became famous in Ohio.

The strain of this famous breed that gained the greatest fame was the so-called Vermont Merinos, which became renowned in that State nearly fifty years after their first introduction into Connecticut. This strain of Merinos a Litchfield County man holds the credit for preserving and developing in their full purity. Thomas Atwood of Woodbury, recognizing the possibilities of the breed, bought several head from Colonel Humphreys's first importation and continued to breed and develop them as a pure strain for over thirty years.

About 1835 Mr. Hammond of Middlebury, Vermont, came to Connecticut in search of a pure strain of

Merino blood and decided that what Mr. Atwood had developed most nearly represented his ideal, and he took several head with him to northern Vermont. Within the next twenty years this Hammond strain of Merinos became world-renowned and brought almost fabulous prices for those times. For instance, for one famous ram of the Atwood strain Mr. Hammond refused five thousand dollars, saying that he "could not afford to sell his best until he was ready to go out of the business of breeding."

Beginning with the peace of Ghent in 1815, at the close of the second war with England, the tariff on wool having been removed, there was a decline in the fine wool industry until about 1825. This will account in part for the failure to develop more generally the Merino breed in New England during the first twenty years following their introduction. Their impress, however, was fixed on a few flocks, and when conditions again became favorable for the development of woolen manufactures, the Merino type of sheep was easily re-established. Beginning about 1825, there was a period of some twenty years when the fine wool industry of western Connecticut attained a high degree of development. Dairying had not been introduced beyond the needs of the farmer's family, as there were very few cities to demand dairy products; but for a good grade of wool, both for household manufacture and for the

rapidly increasing wool factories, there was an ever increasing demand. In towns along the southern edge of the county were kept several flocks of Merinos that were developed from the earlier importations, made at the instigation of Colonel Humphrey, while many importations of Saxony Merinos were made between 1820 and 1840.

In 1824 the Saxony Merinos were introduced into the State and most of the flocks crossed with them. Mr. Samuel Scoville of Salisbury commenced a Saxony flock that year and maintained it for many years. Mr. Hurlburt of Winchester, in connection with Henry Watson of East Windsor, purchased some of the best Saxons of the first importations; and Charles B. Smith, of Walcottville, at a later day, made importations from the best Saxony flocks. In 1846 John Ward of Salisbury had a flock of seven hundred Saxons, with fleeces averaging two and one-half pounds. R. G. Camp of Litchfield had one hundred and seventy Saxons, derived mostly from the flock of Charles B. Smith. The wool was very fine, averaging about three pounds to the sheep, and sold for sixty-six or sixty-eight cents per pound.

About 1850, during the time when the wool industry was at its height, wool buyers went everywhere through the country. Among these was John Brown of Harper's Ferry fame. He and his partner, Tom Swift of

Amenia, who was known to his associates as Saxony Swift, went through this and neighboring counties, buying and trading both wool and sheep.

The home manufacture of wool is as follows: When the shad bush was in blossom, the sheep should be sheared. This was done by the men, the boys attending to the preliminary washing and having great larks dragging the reluctant sheep into the water and giving it a good scrubbing—often getting wetter than the sheep. On the clean barn floor the shearer took his seat and skilfully held the struggling victim with his feet and legs while he clipped the fleece with the spring shears, which, by the by, have altered in pattern scarcely a whit in two hundred years. When the flock was sheared, the wool was scoured with lye to remove the yelk; then, before carding, was slightly oiled to aid in straightening the fibers. In the early days the wool was dyed in the fleece, but after the establishment of the carding mills the dyeing process was deferred until after the yarn was spun. There is a tradition that the wool of black sheep was especially in vogue with the Quakers because it required none of the embellishment of the dye-pot.

The process of dyeing was sometimes a complicated one, requiring manipulation of dye-pots and no end of mordants. Blue was a favorite color, and the indigo dye-pot was a part of the equipment of every kitchen.

I have been told that the deep purple paper in which the old-time cone-shaped sugar loaves were wrapped was always carefully saved and used for dyeing, especially fine lamb's wool, which was designed for making garments for the baby.

Early experiments were made in growing various European plants for dyestuffs, especially in the South. There is little on record of such attempts in Litchfield County, but in the history of Goshen mention is made of the fact that Lewis Mills Norton, one of the foremost men of his time, raised teasels for fulling cloth, and "woad, a fermentative addition to indigo in the pastel vat. Woad was raised to the amount of $1000 annually during part of the years between 1819 and 1844."

It is quite possible that from this attempt to raise the teasels for the fulling of the cloth came the wild teasels which are occasionally found throughout the county.

In connection with dyestuffs it might not be amiss to suggest that the occasional plants of the wild mignonette (*Resida lutola*) may be the persisting descendants sprung from some early attempt to cultivate the plant for the sake of the good yellow which was obtained from an infusion of this plant. One common name, dyer's weed, alludes to its coloring properties.

After cleaning thoroughly and dyeing, the wool was

ready for carding—a constant evening occupation. The hand cards were simply light, handled boards, of convenient size, on which was firmly fixed a piece of leather stuck full of fine wire teeth. These cards were usually the product of the farmer's leisure hours in the long winter evenings.

The manipulator of the cards would hold one in her left hand resting on her knee with the handle from her. With her right hand she would detach from the fleece enough of the uncombed wool to make a roll, catch it lightly back and forth on the card, then seize the other card in her right hand and deftly comb it until the tangled fibers were straightened; then by a dexterous movement she would coax it into a light, fluffy roll ready for the wheel. It was fascinating work to watch, though monotonous to do, and the finished product was always a joy to the children, who had often to be reproved for slyly pinching or fondling the fleecy rolls.

The establishment of carding mills was about the first step toward lightening the labor of the home. For many years the more conservative of the women refused to send out the wool to be carded, claiming that the rolls were more uneven and harder to run into a firm, even yarn than the hand-made rolls, yet by 1870 hand-carding was almost a lost art.

This date may seem a very recent one, and some may wonder if the home manufacture of woolen prod-

ucts did indeed come down to such recent times. Undoubtedly most of the manufacture of woolen goods, especially of all kinds of woolen cloth, had been taken from the homes into small factories, as we shall presently see, but during and after the Civil War many farms produced their own wool, and it was spun at home into yarn for the stout, home-knit stockings, tippets, wristers, and mittens.

An old lady, who died many years ago, told me in my childhood as we stood by a great thorn tree near her home, that when she was a girl, about 1830, after the sheep were sheared the fleeces were put in a great linen sheet and were firmly pinned into a bundle to send to the carding mill. "And because pins were scarce in those days we girls always used to come down to this thorn bush and cut off the long, slender thorns to fasten the bundle. Father never cut this bush when he trimmed the roadsides."

The wool, when back from the carding mill, was deftly spun by the women of the household on the great wheel—and a more graceful occupation never engaged the attention of woman. Back and forth the spinner would walk, holding the roll lightly in her left hand, while with her right she kept the wheel in motion; and the whir of the wheel and the hum of the spindle, as it wound upon itself the just made yarn, made a pleasant accompaniment to the song of the spinner. There

seemed to be something in this creative work, this making of a new thing out of the raw material, which inspired the song—at least I never knew a spinner working in her home by herself who didn't sing as she wrought.

After the yarn was spun and skeined it was ready to be wound, and for this purpose the skein was put upon the swifts, whence it could be wound into balls or on shuttles for weaving. Usually the cloth for men's use was the plain homespun of whose durability an old man, who was one of a large family, said: "Mother'd weave a web for the oldest boy's suit; when he outgrew it, it was handed down to the next, and so all the six had a chance at it. When the youngest boy had outgrown it and the suit was still as good as ever, the Lord created the moth to eat it up."

In the very earliest times the cloth was worn as it came from the loom, there being no means of dressing it. In later days fulling mills were erected in various parts of the country and the fabric was given a crude dressing.

The old process of fulling is thus described: "The fulling of cloth is commenced by scouring the fabric in water holding in suspension an aluminous clay called fuller's earth, or other detergent, to absorb the grease. It is then washed and beaten by heavy wooden mallets in a trough, soap and hot water being copiously used in

the operation, whereby the cloth acquires body and thickness by a shrinking or condensing of the web close and compact, and increases its beauty and firmness. The teasels were used to 'pick up the nap.' "

Aside from cloth for family wear, the mother and sisters wove the heavy coverlet of intricate design which is now regarded as such a treasure, lighter rose blankets, soft flannel and various stuffs of mixed wool and linen. They were great knitters, too, and many are the stories of the mittens knit before breakfast to take the place of those lost the day before.

The washing, preparatory to the animals' clipping, was a task that always interested the boys. Wool in those days was sold washed and sometimes scoured, and particularly if the wool was wanted for home use the scouring was necessary. The washing removed most of the winter's accumulation of hay seed, chaff and dirt, while the scouring was designed for removing the grease or yelk. The loss by the removal of these materials was known as the shrinkage. This is a variable factor with wool in general, but with the Merino sheep, whose wool is always very oily, the shrinkage was never less than one-half. The rapid development of woolen factories, all over New England, provided a ready sale for all the wool the farmer wished to sell. As late as 1840, homespun was the common clothing worn by the members of nearly every family in the rural towns.

With the opening up of the great central West, and later with the development of ranching in the far West, the price of wool dropped and the Eastern farmer found himself unable to compete with the wool grown on these vast areas of cheap land, and so, in many sections, he began to turn his attention to dairy farming.

The passing of the animal with the "golden hoof" had its drawbacks. Sheep, by browsing, kept the brush in check, and this, together with the fineness and the high fertilizing value of their droppings, made them the best class of livestock to improve pastures. The Goshen hardhack (*Potentilla fruticosa*), a hardy and persistent shrub that is now filling up many pastures to the exclusion of grasses and clovers, was not known in Litchfield County until after the sheep industry waned. To-day it is the greatest pasture pest on many acres of land.

Much of the land in this county is better suited to sheep than to any other livestock. One drawback to keeping sheep is the poor fences; the stone walls which were once efficient barriers have now become dilapidated and the wooden fences also are often in a state of decay. Where modern, woven-wire fencing is adopted there is yet a valuable place for this class of livestock.

As a means of furnishing the home with a source of meat, sheep will again have a useful place on many farms, and with the growing influx of summer residents

a fine quality of lamb is already in demand. It should be realized that the fine-wooled type of sheep no longer has a place here, because the chief demand is for a fine quality of lamb and mutton. Several of the so-called Down breeds are noted for their early lambs and their wool is of fair quality and quantity.

By buying up and fencing some of the rougher areas of Litchfield County and stocking the same with a good grade of mutton sheep, a large business could be developed with such cities as New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury, with a prospect of good returns on the investment.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MODERN FARM

FARMING has so changed in the past fifty years that one almost needs a new vocabulary to express the operations of the farm as now conducted. Diversity is still the rule in Litchfield County, but is modified on most farms by having a leading specialty. In the majority of cases this specialty is dairying, which in general means the production of market milk, either for local markets or for shipment to New York. This leading specialty is commonly supplemented by the production of potatoes and other garden truck, by the production of small and large fruits for market, or, in the Housatonic valley, by the growing of tobacco. On many farms poultry forms an important part of the cash income of the farmer, and wherever dairy by-prod-

ucts are available as poultry feed, this branch of farming proves especially profitable.

On account of the ready access by rail to the New York markets, the shipping of milk early became an important branch of farming. A New York milk company established shipping stations along the Housatonic Railway as early as 1870, and since then this county has been an important source of supply for that city. The milk shipping industry and the cooperative creamery proved a great boon to the farmers of Litchfield County, as well as to the rest of New England. It removed from the household the laborious task of caring for the milk and of manufacturing it into butter or cheese. No more important improvement has come to our farm life than this, for with the manufacture of the dairy products added to the ordinary duties of the household, the engrossing labor and cares of our early farm mothers were certainly burdensome. It is within the memory of some of the older mothers, too, that all of the cooking had to be done in the open fireplace and all of the baking in the big oven, which had to have its walls thoroughly heated by burning hardwood in it, after which it must be cleaned out preparatory to baking the pies and cakes.

To-day many farm homes are as well equipped as the city flat. Not a few farm houses have hot and cold water throughout, while furnace or steam heat and a

well equipped bathroom are common, and sometimes, if power lines pass the farm, electric lighting is installed. The rural mail system, which provides for daily delivery, has made general the taking of daily papers, while magazines and other forms of wholesome circulating literature are found in nearly every country home. The advent of good roads, accompanied by the automobile, is providing means for freer social intercourse between families in the country and between the country folk and their city cousins.

On the farm proper the sulky plow, the wheel harrow, the grain seeder, the horse corn-planter, the potato planter, the mowing machine, the horse rake, the hay loader, the reaper, the corn harvester and the potato digger have greatly reduced the hand labor required in performing the various operations of fitting the land, of planting, of cultivating and of harvesting. In fact, so general is the use of machine power that the farmer of to-day needs to be a good mechanic to handle his farming operations to the best advantage.

As has already been pointed out, the chief branch of farming throughout the county to-day is dairying. Connecticut has long been known as a dairy State. Her many thriving towns and cities provide a home market for milk, butter and cheese, while on account of her location, midway between New York and Boston, her surplus milk quickly reaches these large centers. Up to

about 1880 the making of cheese in factories and the home production of butter and cheese were the chief branches of dairying. Even ten or fifteen years later, with the exception of farms near the railroads, cheese was an important dairy product in our State and county. Coöperative creameries were started about 1880, and these, within a few years, almost entirely supplanted the cheese factories and the home manufacture of cheese and butter. From 1880 to 1895, co-operative creameries increased in the State from less than half a dozen to over sixty. Since about 1900, however, there has been a steady decline in butter-making, with a constant increase in the shipping of milk.

Coincident with the changes in the leading branches of farming practised within the county came changes in the class of cattle kept. As soon as the growing of beef and of sheep, on the cheaper but more fertile lands of the West, made the production of these meats of doubtful profit in New England, our farmers were led to see the advantages of the purely dairy type of cattle. A combination of the beef type and the dairy type of cattle might have been valuable up to the days of cheap Western beef, but not after that. Prior to about 1870 the Shorthorn and the Devon breeds of cattle held a prominent place in Litchfield County, but with the lack of profit in beef and with cheaper horse labor, these breeds no longer filled the requirements of our farmers.

Connecticut early became the American home of some of the best of the old-world dairy breeds. While the Jersey was introduced into the State as early as 1851, it was not until between 1865 and 1870 that this breed and her sister type, the Guernsey, began to be noticed in the dairy annals of the State, particularly in Hartford County. Noted herds of Jerseys were established in the early seventies at Echo Farm in Litchfield and by the Eldridges of Norfolk, while others became more or less interested in a small way. Following the introduction of creameries, there was a diffusion of Jersey blood throughout the herds supplying these factories. This was due to the fact that quality rather than quantity of milk was the basis of profit in selling through the creamery.

In the milk-shipping sections, however, a different condition prevailed. Milk shipped to New York was, for many years, ungraded, as far as richness in fat was concerned. This naturally led to the keeping of such cattle as would produce quantity of milk rather than quality, as the two characteristics are rarely found in a single type of cattle. Holsteins had for many years been bred for high milk production on the rich lowlands of Holland, and early in the days of milk-shipping they became prominent in the Hudson and the Harlem valleys and soon after were introduced into Litchfield County. To-day no breed is more popular among

those who are shipping milk to New York than the "black and white" cattle. The Ayrshire breed is one that, in the cheese days, held a high place in the estimation of dairymen, but as to quantity of milk alone she cannot compete with the Holstein, and the quality of her milk will not place her in the same class as the Jerseys and the Guernseys. However, with an increasing tendency to buy milk according to a standard of four per cent fat, the Ayrshire is now gaining in popularity. No breed furnishes a better grade of milk for infants, and to-day certified milk farms are searching the country for cows of this breed.

One other breed of cattle that has, within the past twenty years, become popular in the county is the Guernsey. This is sometimes known as the "rich man's cow." No breed has become more popular on country estates where beauty of form and quality of product are the chief requisites. As a business farmer's cow, where high testing milk is wanted, there is little difference between the Guernsey and the Jersey. The rich yellow milk of the Guernsey, however, makes her a special favorite among those who want a choice family product. Several farms in the county have choice specimens of this breed, and one farm at least has attained somewhat of a national reputation as the home of noted Guernseys.

The modern dairy barn is as much of an evolution as

the dairy breeds. In the early days of the dairy industry it was supposed that it must be almost entirely a summer business—that if the cow produced a liberal flow of milk from April to December, she must of necessity "rest from her labors" the balance of the year. Yet we know that modern conditions of stabling and of feeding have changed all this, so that now milk is produced as readily in winter as in summer. This has been brought about, in a great measure, by improved methods of housing. The barn, that let in the first rays of the morning sun through its many cracks, and that, in the same way, let in the northern blasts and the drifting snows, is a thing of the past. Closely constructed and yet well ventilated barns are the homes of our modern breeds of livestock. Water flowing into inside troughs has been generally substituted for the hole in the ice at a near-by pond or brook; while modern facilities for reducing labor are a part of the equipment of every well arranged dairy barn. The introduction of the silo has increased the profit in the winter production of milk, as it supplies the cheapest form of succulent feed for use in the winter season. While the cheap labor available on some of the European dairy farms may make the growing and use of root crops profitable, under our labor conditions well grown and well preserved silage is more economical.

The statement is often made in Litchfield County, as

elsewhere, that there is no profit in producing market milk at present wholesale prices, and yet the fact remains that many farmers are not only providing a good livelihood for their families, but at the same time are educating their children and paying off mortgages that earlier conditions made necessary, or that came as a heritage. There is no question, to-day, but that dairy farming provides a ready market for a large amount of directly non-salable farm products that can be converted into readily salable animal products and thus be made to return a good profit. From a business viewpoint, the conditions that are essential in establishing this profit are a converting machine—the dairy cow—well adapted to the work expected of her, and a well organized system of farm management for making this converting machine do its work efficiently.

Those farming sections of Litchfield County that lie within easy reach of good markets, generally show the highest prosperity. This is due to the fact that a variety of farming projects can be undertaken, so that there will be several sources of revenue, and, furthermore, to the fact that near-by markets provide the smallest cost of handling between producer and consumer. It is a well established fact that in our large cities about two-thirds of the cost price, to the consumer, of food products used is represented in the cost of transportation and handling, and in the profits of those

doing this work, thus leaving approximately one-third of what the consumer pays as the producer's portion. Where a large part of the cost of transportation and handling can be eliminated, as is the case with near-by markets, the producer's share of the retail price is greatly increased. In some cases, too, the farmer may become the retailer and so reap all of the outlay for the farm products that the consumer buys.

Our home markets are a great source of revenue in the sale of cash crops that can be grown to supplement the income of the dairy. Narrow specialization is seldom the most profitable type of farming, because under such a system the labor of the farm is not well utilized. Then again, seasonal conditions may seriously reduce the profits from one crop or product and not from another. Dairy farming will allow for the growing of such supplementary market crops as garden truck, potatoes, cabbage, fruit, and even hay. The nearness to market, the demands of the market and the type of soil will indicate which of these is likely to prove most profitable on a particular farm. On the hill lands, at considerable distance from the markets, many farmers to-day are growing, at good profit, apples of the finest quality, while hay always finds a ready sale, either loose or baled, in our manufacturing towns and cities. Potatoes, cabbage and turnips are crops that can be handled at a considerable distance from markets, and such

manufacturing centers as Winsted, Torrington, Waterbury and Danbury afford a ready market for these products. Poultry products, too, are in demand far beyond the local supply, and the cheap, rough lands of the county are as well suited to the keeping of poultry as are the highest priced lands of the valleys. Our working classes to-day, in city and town, are receiving such good wages that they are demanding the best grade of fruits and vegetables, put up in an attractive form. Thriving manufacturing towns like Winsted, Torrington, Waterbury and Danbury are being supplied from near-by farms with small fruits and vegetables. On account of their freshness and high quality these products command the highest prices, and the producers are reaping the rewards of their skill.

In general, to-day, those farmers who are guided by the demands of the markets for a high class of food products, and who are striving to meet these demands in accordance with the nature of their soils and their location, are prospering in the business of farming in Litchfield County, as elsewhere in the East.

CHAPTER IX

COUNTRY LIFE, OLD AND NEW

THE fact that there has been a decline in the population of most of the strictly rural towns of New England has led many to assume that there has been general decadence in agriculture. That a decline has taken place in towns far from the centers of trade is true, but this does not mean that agriculture as a whole is on the decline. In fact, agriculture is more prosperous than ever in sections near good markets. In order to understand the decline that did take place, half a century or more ago, in many of the rural towns of this county, we need to consider the general evolution in industrial life that was going on everywhere in our country. Litchfield County passed through the same industrial evolution between 1840 and 1870 that mani-

fested itself generally in the East. The concentrating into large central plants of the small manufacturing industries that had grown up throughout the rural towns went on rapidly during these years. This soon developed strong industrial centers along the waterways, where good power was available. The railroads that were being built through the river valleys favored this concentration by affording ready means of transportation. The hat business, that had been a household trade, was centered in Danbury. The tanneries that were general over the county, and the scythe factories of Salisbury, were centered in Winsted. Small silk and wool industries, that were at one time found in nearly every town, went to Winsted and Waterbury. The small industries that formerly helped to make the rural towns prosperous, thus went to build up big central plants. These industrial changes were the means of draining away much of the life and wealth of the country towns. During this same period, too, the vast, cheap, fertile areas of the great Central West were opened for settlement. A rocky hill farm in Connecticut could be sold for a few dollars an acre and the proceeds would establish the owner on a new, free farm of 160 acres in Illinois or Iowa, every foot of which was tillable land. More often, the sons were attracted by the opportunities presented in these new fields, and when the old folks passed on no one was left to care for

the ancestral acres. This resulted in the return of many acres to a condition of forest growth, which always follows a period of cessation in active farming.

Thus the pressure of new and uncontrollable conditions forced many of the inhabitants of our rural towns to seek new fields of enterprise. The soil had not lost all its fertility, but competition from newer, more fertile and more workable fields, together with the new form of industrial life represented in the large towns and cities, had so changed the opportunities for reasonable returns from labor that the migration of a considerable portion of the inhabitants became an economic necessity. The causes, therefore, of whatever decline was seen in our rural towns must be looked for in the great industrial changes that were going on in our country as a whole, and in the development of new fields of competitive agriculture, rather than in the decline of our agriculture or the decadence of our country life.

That the churches and schools should feel the force of this general decline was to be expected, but that it should be ascribed to a decadence in religious life would be as unsound as to say that the world has lost its sense of religious responsibility because the great powers of Europe are now at war. The best life of many of the rural towns was drained away, and has, in a measure, been replaced by those who have not the same sense of responsibility toward the church, the school and the

town as had their predecessors. The church and the school must readjust themselves to the new conditions. Agriculture readjusts itself to new economic conditions more quickly than do other rural forces. The church and the schools must follow its example and so plan their work as to fit the new environment. The social life of our rural towns is being developed through other agencies than the church. The mistake that the church has commonly made is in holding herself aloof from the life of the community, instead of being a part of it. In those communities where the church is the center of the social and the literary life of the farm folk, as is conspicuously the case in a few rural towns of this county, the hold on the religious life of the people continues strong. The ministry must be in sympathy with farm life and the natural advantages of life in the open country in order to have the church retain its hold on the farm people. A special class of pastors, who know from experience the real problems of the farm, will be the logical outgrowth of any effective movement for a better religious life in our country towns.

Organization is the key-note of modern farm life. In fact, farm life as a business and a social force is now being organized as never before. There was a time when the life of the farmer was individualistic in the extreme, but that time has passed. Through the various organizations, whose function is to foster a

deeper insight into the advantages of special branches of farming, the farmer is gradually seeing the benefits of organized effort. Thus the Grange, the Pomological Society, the Dairymen's Association, the Poultry Association, and many other organizations are developing a tendency, among those who are interested in certain specialties, to work together, as well as to learn from each other's experiences.

The farm families of Litchfield County have been especially fortunate in the opportunities afforded for education. While the public schools, probably, have averaged no better than in other rural sections of Connecticut, secondary schools under private management have been more general. In the early days the rural academy was an educational center in nearly every town, and later such schools as the Gunnery, Robbins, Taft, Kent and Hotchkiss have offered educational advantages within the financial reach of the farmer's family. The movement to consolidate our public schools has been slow, due often to long distances and bad roads for transporting the children; but the general good roads movement is paving the way for this. The work of our schools, too, is slowly but surely shaping itself to conform to the life of the rural towns. What such towns as Salisbury and Washington and Winsted are doing to introduce nature study, practical mechanics and the household arts into their work, is but an index

of a new type of rural school work that will tend to fit the masses for real country life rather than be a step toward a classical education, to which only the few will ever attain.

There are two types of country homes, more or less common throughout the county. One is represented by country estates owned by city men of wealth, who use the country mainly as a playground, and whose interest in country life and country affairs is generally temporary. The other is represented by those farms that have come down in the family line through many generations and whose owners are trying to perpetuate a form of country life that seeks to gain a comfortable living from the land, and at the same time to rear and educate well a family under wholesome rural conditions.

The country estates, owned and used as summer homes by business men from the cities, may be divided into two classes: those occupying large areas whose owners are farming on an extensive scale, and those occupying limited areas whose owners are interested mainly in having a beautiful and restful summer home, with land enough to provide a playground and choice farm products sufficient to meet the needs of the family.

Men of wealth in this country are developing a tendency toward the establishment of a landed aristocracy, but at the same time are not adopting the business policy in land management that our English cousins are

using. Most of the large farms owned by city men of wealth are not managed on a strictly business basis. The equipment and the methods employed are not in keeping with the farm receipts. The wealthy manufacturer, for example, does not use the same kind of business methods on his farm that he does in his shops. He does not expect the same degree of efficiency in his farm help as he does in his factory help. He often looks on the farm as a plaything, as a place to spend money, and not to make it. We would not imply that there is no place in business farming for the man of wealth. He might well show that there is good profit on a considerable investment of capital in farming operations, but he must adopt the same rigid business methods that other lines of business follow. In fact, there are now several large farms in the county that are being managed on a sound business basis and are showing good profit from the investment of considerable capital.

The other class of country homes, owned by men whose business is mainly in the city, is represented by those estates that control only limited areas and are located in spots chosen for their natural beauty and developed with a view to making a pleasant, restful country home with land enough to afford the family all of the choice farm products that can readily be supplied. Such places can make use of nature's abundance to de-

velop home surroundings of the most charming kind. The true lover of nature may surround his home with the shrubs and plants, rarer and choicer than any commercial florist can supply, taken from the wild, and often from his own lands. Norfolk affords several such homes with houses of simple lines, banked with laurel and native rhododendron and with grounds dotted here and there with mountain ash, birch and other native trees, the whole having a background of native conifers. Such homes, nestled among the hills, provide a quiet and restful retreat not found on the broad, fertile acres of the flat country.

In general the owners of the second type of country homes are descendants of the original settlers. They feel an ancestral pride in seeing the farm improve, with the idea that it will remain in the family for generations to come. In building, they build not alone for the immediate present but also for future generations. If they set out an orchard they do not always expect to reap the full rewards of the fruits thereof themselves, but live in the hope that future generations will enjoy the fruits of their labors. If they make permanent and lasting improvements on a piece of land, they do it with the feeling that the next generation will profit from their labors fully as much as the one who does the work. They are not like the famous politician who, when told that he ought to have consideration for the rights of

posterity, remarked, "What has posterity ever done for me? Let posterity look out for its own rights!" Many, however, are like the old farmer whose farm had a beautiful setting on the shores of a sparkling lake. He was interviewed one day by a millionaire who was flying through in his limousine. Pleased with the beauty of the place, the millionaire stopped and asked the farmer to set a price on his farm. He was promptly told that the farm was not for sale. Then, with an impatient gesture, the millionaire remarked, "My friend, consider a minute. A few thousand dollars one way or the other makes no difference to me; set your price." But the farmer coolly replied, "The farm is not for sale, sir!" With a feeling of contempt the lordly millionaire tried once more. "But you would not refuse to exchange shining gold for these rough acres and these humble dwellings?" "My friend," said the farmer, pointing to the weatherbeaten house, "I was born in that southwest room from which you can look down over that beautiful lake, and there I expect to die. Other generations will own this property when I am gone. You will have to look elsewhere for your farm." And the millionaire sped on in disgust.

The owners of these ancestral farms are striving not only to perpetuate their homes in the family but to keep up the standard of the country school and the country church. They realize that these institutions are assets

in country life that not only influence the moral tone of the community but also affect land values. They do not hesitate, when the time comes, to spend a few hundred dollars on the higher education that will help their children the better to enjoy life in the country and equip them better to cope with the complex farm problems that an advanced type of civilization always brings.

History shows that land ownership by the many tends to develop a more general interest in national life and public affairs than does the concentration of land ownership in the hands of the few. This fact has been manifested in our own country in the general response from our farm homes for recruits to defend our national life in time of war. The farmer is keen to grasp the fact that great moral and economic issues in public life influence his business as quickly as any business in the country. The fact, too, that farming is an industry that requires skill and intellectual acumen along many lines tends to broaden the farmer, while the division of labor required of the workman in many other industries tends to narrowness. No class of men to-day is more independent in thought and action, on great public questions, than farmers of advanced type. This has shown itself more strikingly in political life in the past decade or two than ever before. Local, State and national issues are being studied from the broad viewpoint of public good rather than from the narrow one of partisan

choice. The farmers have become a reading people, and the extension of the parcel post, good roads, village and circulating libraries is making this condition more and more possible. The general introduction of metropolitan daily newspapers into country homes has done more to broaden the life of the farmer and to put him in touch with great world questions than any other thing that has entered into his life.

CHAPTER X

COUNTRY COMMUNITY PROGRESS

WHILE it is generally admitted that life in the open country tends to develop a physically and morally strong people, yet the disadvantages of life remote from the large centers must not be overlooked. Whatever can be done to make country life broader and better by making the social and educational advantages enjoyed by the city more available to the country, will tend to a higher civilization. We need a country life developed out of its own resources rather than one having the unnatural life of the cities engrafted upon it. Many country people are making the mistake to-day of trying to engraft city customs upon the life of the country, while some country people are assuming the rôle of the city "dude," instead of developing a healthy com-

munity life and a rugged and normal individual life that should be the outgrowth of their environment.

There is a growing tendency, too, among city people of liberal means and good intentions to want to do something for the betterment of life in the country. Such endeavor, when rightly directed, is to be commended. It cannot be done, however, by transferring the city to the country. Whatever can be done to make the country people see and enjoy the advantages of the country, is to be commended. The one thing that country people lack is a full realization of what they have to enjoy. Country children especially need to be taught how to enjoy life in the country and how to see and appreciate Nature in her many and varied phases. The boys' and girls' club contests in the growing of poultry, vegetables, fruits and flowers will tend to develop a healthy rivalry that cannot fail to arouse interest in growing things. The Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls are forms of wholesome endeavor and recreation that are tending to arouse a spirit of self-reliance and an interest in one's community, as well as to develop a vigorous physical life. The country fair, in its rural simplicity, such as Norfolk has so well illustrated, is to be commended and has wholesome recreational and educational advantages well worth while. But when the cheap side-show and the "midway" are engrafted on the country fair, it is likely to be perverted from its

real function and become an unwholesome, if not a dangerous, institution.

This county is rich in historical lore that should be perpetuated in the lives of our people. The drama and the historical pageant, built on these historic events, would do more for the social and educational uplift of our towns than all the "movies" ever projected. An historical room in each town for preserving, and for exhibiting to the rising generation, samples of the household arts and treasures of the past, together with the crude and cumbersome farming tools with which our fathers labored, would do much to develop local pride and interest in local history.

The circulating library, rightly directed from good library centers, has possibilities for good in our rural homes, not fully realized. One lack in many rural homes is good literature for the children. Every school-house might well be made a community center for the distribution of wholesome books for young people. If rightly chosen, these books could be utilized by the teacher to arouse an interest in nature and in country life that the prevailing fiction often tends to deaden.

The visiting nurse has come into a few of our rural towns as a result of the generous interest in community welfare manifested by those who have the means and the inclination to help their fellow-citizens to help themselves. This spirit of prompting self-help, through

sympathetic encouragement and through suggestions for utilizing agencies directly at hand, is the modern form of benevolence that is to-day very wisely replacing the old form of giving. What is given outright is rarely appreciated as much as the opportunity to do for one's self, which can be made use of without lessening the self-respect of the recipient. If country people can only be led to appreciate the value of fresh air, pure water, simple, wholesome food and effective sewage disposal, through the suggestive teachings of the district nurse, it will do more for country welfare than all the direct gifts that charity can offer to the country.

The public school is an institution that is fundamental in the life of any free people. A public school system that is free to all, at the expense of every one in the community, lies at the foundation of our educational system. While the public school is a community institution, unfortunately it often does not lie within the power of the community to shape the policy of the school. Our educational system is the outgrowth of an age when only the children of the wealthy were supposed to profit by its advantages. It is based on the principle of culture, and this was at first its real function. To-day, instead of the few profiting by the schools, they are used by the many. Our rural schools must shape their work to fit the needs of the rural people. When we reflect that less than ten per cent of those who pass

the grades ever enter the high school, or have any further school privileges, we can begin to appreciate the importance of a school system that will shape itself to the needs of the masses.

Interest in country life and country affairs can be developed best during the formative period of the child's life, or between six and fifteen years of age. Why should there not be an endeavor made at this age to develop interest in the type of life and environment that the larger number of country children are sure to experience through life? Fortunately, we are beginning to see our responsibilities and duties in this direction and are so modifying our plan of instruction in rural schools as to make it fit the life of the people. Problems in arithmetic are now drawn more from farm life and less from commercial city life. More problems are being drawn from the daily business of the farm and fewer from the banking house, based on stocks and bonds that the child will probably never deal with. More historical incidents are drawn from local life and the work of our ancestors and less from the succession of kings. More interest is being developed in what grows under our feet, and less in the products of India or Australia. We rejoice to see the community endeavor to interest the children of our public schools in garden and shop work, in fruits and in flowers, such as has been developed in Salisbury and Washington. One value of

all such endeavor is that it helps the child to find his bent in life; and when interest in some one subject is aroused, the child begins to become more interested in all other school subjects.

There is probably no one agency that has done more for rural betterment in this county, as well as in the State as a whole, than the Grange or Patrons of Husbandry. While this organization is nearly fifty years old, its influence was not widely felt in this State until about thirty years ago. The Grange was at first urged for its financial advantages in cooperative buying and selling, but it was soon seen that it would never be a marked success in this line. Later, its educational and social features were urged upon the attention of farmers. As a means of getting the rural people together in a social way, it has been well worth the efforts of its most loyal supporters. The fact that it has brought both sexes into its work has tended to strengthen family ties. It brings the farm families together in one big community family. In its educational work it has made possible the consideration of questions relating to the home as well as to the farm. It has afforded opportunities, to a greater degree than any other agency, for the development of men and women from our farms who have become useful in public life.

We are just entering a period of extension work in agriculture and home economics that bids fair to do

more for country people than anything that has come into play heretofore. The Smith-Lever Act, recently passed by Congress, makes available a fund that is to increase year by year, based on the proportion of the rural population to the total population. This fund is to be used by the State college of agriculture in each State, in giving instruction away from the college, and is designed to benefit those who are not in position to take a course at the college. It is based, however, on the coöperative idea; for example, no State can profit by the fund, available year by year, unless it matches it by a similar appropriation to be used for the same purposes.

The Farm Bureau work, now organized in nearly all the States, while it antedates the Smith-Lever Act, is now operated through the fund provided by that act. This movement carries the coöperative idea one step further because it requires the people of each county that benefits by its privileges to form a part of the cooperative plan. The plan is to unite the Federal government, the State and the county in a joint program for the improvement of rural conditions. The movement contemplates the development in each county of an organization to be known as "The Farm Bureau Association," whose duty it is to foster the work of the Farm Bureau by assisting the local manager to deal with the rural problems of the county. The local manager or

county agent can do little as an individual, on account of the magnitude of the work before him. With the support and cooperation of a local organization, however, he will become acquainted with the needs of the people in different sections of the county and can deal with groups rather than with individuals.

One important function of the county agent is to act as a clearing house between the people of the county and the other coöperating agencies. He is in position to make available expert knowledge from the Federal Department of Agriculture, the State Department of Agriculture, the State Library and the State College. It is a part of the general plan to make this work as available to the home as it is to the farm proper. Ultimately this will be accomplished by placing a woman agent in each county, who will assist in solving problems of the farm home. Community cooperation will make this work available by organizing a small local club to meet at the homes of its members, or at the district schoolhouse, or some other public building. There is every reason why the school buildings, which are built by public funds, should become community centers for the benefit of all of the people in a community. In this way, the schools can be more closely linked with the life of the community, and, on the other hand, a greater interest in the work of the schools will be developed among the people.

There is one line of cooperation in which the country and the city might get together more fully than has thus far been done. The country should be a big playground for the city. This, however, should be brought about without having the city people feel that they have the freedom of fields, orchards and groves without regard to the rights of the owners. Public parks, public lakes and public forest areas will make this possible without trespassing on private rights. With the seashore borders now mainly taken up by private owners, the general public must look to the lake and hill country for a place of recreation. It is as much a function of public welfare to provide healthy recreation for our people as it is to provide sanitary conditions. Those who are deprived of the privileges of play do not know how to work. Our larger lake areas, with a strip of shore, should be brought under the control of the State and be thrown open for public camps, under proper regulations, just as are the State forest reserves of the Adirondacks. These beauty spots could be developed into healthful resorts, at small expense, and be made available for those who cannot rent cottages or afford to go to the summer hotels.

Litchfield County has available an area of non-agricultural land that should be developed as a vast public playground and forest reserve. In the northwest corner of the county, what is known as Mount Riga com-

prises an area, some ten miles long and six miles wide, that is admirably adapted for park and forest purposes. This area includes some of the wildest swamps, the most picturesque ravines and the most beautiful lakes to be found in New England.

During the period of high prices for pig iron, between 1870 and 1880, most of this area was "coaled off," the wood being burned for making charcoal. Since that time a good growth of timber has resulted, but several large areas have been devastated by forest fires. This whole area might, under proper State management, be made a source of public wealth, as well as a public playground. Under proper forest management, with lookout posts and fire paths, it would be possible to check the damage by fires and keep the forest growth in steady progress. By proper thinning, many sections could be made to pay the cost of the thinning by the sale of wood removed, and the portions left would improve rapidly under the better opportunities for sunlight and soil fertility. Certain sections already thinned by the owner are showing the possibility of a more rapid growth, in contrast with other areas not thinned.

This area is not only available for affording a good lesson in forestry, but also for showing the possibility of game and fish control under State supervision. No area is better situated for breeding both fish and game on a large scale, as it affords naturally wild, forest

seclusion, and several lakes and brooks where a variety of fish can be allowed to develop in their natural environment.

If we could only develop the large vision that a few progressive and public-spirited men are already showing, we might not only look forward to a vast park area in our own county, but hope to see it a part of a larger area which would include a section of Massachusetts and New York, adjoining the Connecticut area. Thus might be developed a tri-State park and forest reserve unsurpassed in picturesqueness and beauty by anything south of the White Mountains.

CHAPTER XI

A PIONEER IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

CONNECTICUT was among the first of the States to promote agricultural education. Jared Eliot of Killingworth, preacher, physician and farmer, wrote the first American book on agriculture, "Essays upon Field Husbandry," published in 1747. Though not the first in the field among the institutions of higher education, instruction in agricultural science was given continuously at Yale College from 1848, when the first Professor of Agricultural Chemistry was appointed, down to the early nineties, when the State Agricultural College was established at Storrs.

So in the line of agricultural schools Connecticut was a pioneer, as probably the earliest successful farm school in this country was the one established by Dr.

S. W. Gold and his son Theodore. Connecticut, too, established the first Agricultural Experiment Station in America in 1875. The movement for the establishment of this institution was promoted by T. S. Gold from the first, and when established he was for more than twenty years a member of its board of control.

The Gold estate in Cornwall has now passed into the seventh generation in the direct family line, and this fact of itself, together with the increasing value of the property, makes the former owner and the farm of more than passing interest. The property has been transmitted in the family line from the Douglas ancestors who cleared the land from the forest. In the Gold ancestry may be found such names as Talcott, Ruggles, Sedgwick, Wadsworth and Cleveland, representing strong lines tracing back to colonial days.

Theodore Sedgwick Gold, the son of a Connecticut physician and farmer, was born March 2, 1818, in Madison, New York. While yet in his infancy, his parents moved to Goshen in Litchfield County, where Theodore spent most of his boyhood. In 1842 his father gave up the practice of medicine and removed to the ancestral home on Cream Hill, West Cornwall, where he and Theodore began illustrious careers as agricultural leaders and teachers.

Graduating from Yale College in 1838, young Gold spent the next four years in teaching and study.

Part of the time he taught in Eagle Academy, Goshen, and part of the time was spent in scientific studies at Yale. In 1845 he and his father opened an agricultural school on the home farm in West Cornwall. This school was continued for twenty-four years and numbered among its scholars some of the notable men of the country. Mr. Gold was always interested in the natural sciences and took up special studies in these subjects at college, and what he learned from his father, coupled with a wide love of nature, fitted him especially as an instructor in subjects that had a particular bearing on agriculture. His house, throughout his life, contained an interesting collection of specimens of minerals and plants of his own collecting. There was hardly a plant growing on his large estate with which he was not familiar. His garden, too, was always a testing ground for new fruits, herbs and vegetables that might be of interest or of value.

The school was not managed simply as a training school for the farm, but provided that all-round training sure to be useful in any walk of life. Many of the students went to college and later became men of prominence in business and professional life. Manual labor was not a requirement, but Mr. Gold always spent a part of each day working on the farm, and the boys delighted to accompany him and to listen to his wise counsel and his practical explanations.

PIONEER IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Perhaps without an exception, those who knew Mr. Gold best will agree that his greatest achievement was as secretary and official executive of the Connecticut State Board of Agriculture. Though not the first board of its kind in New England, it has had an almost continuous and a very useful career for a period of fifty years. From the time of its establishment in 1866 for more than thirty years, Mr. Gold was its secretary and the guiding force that shaped its policies. The reports of this board were, for many years, sought by students of agriculture in all parts of the country, as a source of many of the latest teachings in the science of agriculture. The speakers at the board meetings, whose addresses were published in full, stood forth as exponents of the new science of agriculture. Mr. Gold's work, as secretary of this board, was the chief factor in leading farmers of the State to accept the new teachings in relation to agriculture, which at first were regarded with suspicion or indifference, but which are now accepted and used by nearly all farmers.

The winter meeting of the board was for many years the chief agricultural event of the year in the State. The program, thoughtfully and logically arranged, gave the audience the best knowledge and thought on scientific and practical farming and home-making. It was characteristic of these meetings that, each year, one leading theme ran through the whole program. One

year it was soil fertility, another dairying, again dairy-farm crops, and again animal or plant diseases. Enough other interesting and useful material was incorporated to hold the attention of those not interested in the chief line of discussion, but at the same time the concentration was on one chief theme. One feature, which was new to early agricultural conventions, was always incorporated and adhered to by Mr. Gold in his programs. That was to have at least one address by a lady speaker of state or national reputation, and to do everything possible to interest the women from the farms in the meetings of the board.

One who knew Mr. Gold and his work for the Board of Agriculture intimately for many years, says of his work as secretary: "With all credit to the speakers and to the wisdom of Mr. Gold's associates, I believe the chief credit for all the work of the board belongs to him. He was the executive of the board and he had all the qualities which a secretary needed: thorough education, intimate farm knowledge, success as a farmer, wide personal acquaintance and great self-control and tact."

Mr. Gold was always interested in forestry. The exhibit of natural woods—sections of tree trunks with the top cut so as to show a sloping section, a vertical section and a transverse section—collected and prepared at his instigation for the Columbian Exposition

in 1893, was one of the most complete shown at Chicago. Many of the specimens came from his own farm. Mr. Gold knew every variety of tree that was native to the State, and so knew where to direct the collecting if he did not have the tree on his own farm. He was instrumental in getting the present forest laws of Connecticut passed, and was interested in promoting the forestry work of the State Forestry Association and the forestry investigations of the State Experiment Station.

During his life of over four-score years he was always interested in developing a farm that would pay a profit and at the same time leave, for the use of the succeeding generations, a soil that was not depleted in fertility. All of his improvements were made with a view to permanency. More than fifty years ago many stone drains were laid that are still doing good work.

Mr. Gold did not hesitate to diverge from the usual system of farming if he felt he had a plan that better fitted his farm. I well remember the incredulity shown by some of the audience when he stated at one of the Board of Agriculture meetings that he had fields on his farm that had not been plowed for over one hundred years, but had been mowed annually during that entire time. On visiting his farm and observing the conditions and the methods used, I was at once struck with the wisdom of the system. The fields in question were

naturally well supplied with moisture, and consisted of a hard clay loam soil rather difficult to plow but well adapted to grass and clover. In keeping these meadows productive Mr. Gold adopted the plan of liberal top-dressing with stable manure and the sowing of clover seed, either every year or every second year early in the spring, when it would get a start without being incorporated with the soil. While the yields of hay obtained under this system were not especially heavy, they were always good and the labor economy of the system made the cost of hay less than on many farms that produced much more to the acre, but at the same time required reseeding every few years.

While Mr. Gold was interested in diversified farming, his most prominent work was in fruit culture, mainly apple orcharding. From the earliest days of the introduction of new fruits, he was interested in testing and growing whatever would add to the comfort and health of the family. In fact, this was true of all lines of products. I never visited a farm home where more of the food products of the table were supplied from the farm, and always in great variety. For example, one would not look for hot-house grapes of the European varieties in Connecticut except on a few private estates of men of considerable wealth, and yet, more than sixty years ago, Mr. Gold grew these for home consumption. So with pears, peaches, plums,

gooseberries and strawberries, the needs of the family were always considered and supplied as far as climatic conditions for the culture of the fruits would permit.

At the present time (1917) there are commercial orchards on the Gold farm, ranging in age from forty to less than six years. Not more than ten years prior to Mr. Gold's death he was interested with his son in planting an orchard of the latest commercial varieties.

Mr. Gold, no doubt, inherited a great love for fruits. Nearly one hundred and fifty years before his death his ancestors planted an orchard on Cream Hill, the story of which he tells in his "Reminiscences," published in 1901:

"As for fruits, there were few grafted or budded trees at the beginning of the century. I have a single tree, a Seeknofurther, grafted near the ground, the last survivor of an orchard which, according to tradition, was planted by my great-grandmother, Sarah (Douglas) Wadsworth, in her early married life, about 1760.

"It has battled with the storms of more than a century, but in its decadence shows much vigor and bears choice fruit, which the sixth generation enjoys.

"Who would not plant a tree with such possibilities?"

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